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CAPTAIN PERRY WAS NOW STANDING IN THE BARGE.—Page 346.

WAR OF 1812 SERIES

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THE  
BOY SAILORS OF 1812

A STORY OF PERRY'S VICTORY  
ON LAKE ERIE IN 1813

BY  
EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY SOLDIERS OF 1812," "THE BOYS WITH  
OLD HICKORY," "CAMPING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE," ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY L. WOOD*



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THE BOY SAILORS OF 1812



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## PREFACE

THE heroic deeds of Commodore Perry on Lake Erie in the summer and fall of 1812 have made his name familiar in every American household. His victory was won just one hundred years ago. The story of it is stimulating to every one who reads or hears the stirring tale. The young Commodore achieved not only a great victory, but he brought honor to his country and to himself in overwhelming an entire fleet of the British. Never before had such a calamity occurred in the history of England's navy.

This story is an attempt to enter once more into the stirring days when those deeds were done. The War of 1812 may not have been a great war in its campaign and strategy, but it clinched the independence of the Colonies in which many had not felt secure since the day when it had been won. In this respect the War of 1812 is like an additional and decisive chapter in the history of the American Revolution.

In times such as these, a century later than when the scenes of this tale were enacted, the problems confronting us as a nation are different from those solved by our fathers, but are no less perplexing.

## PREFACE

With the great inflow of peoples from nations which have never known the price that was paid for the liberty we enjoy, there is special need of information. Patriotism ought to be stimulated to-day as much as it was a hundred years ago. There can be no grasp of present-day problems nor any sure way of solving them without a complete understanding of how the United States came to be, and what our forefathers did to win the freedom which they have left us as the best part of our heritage.

The ardent patriotism of Oliver Hazard Perry, his courage, patience, unselfishness, and unswerving fidelity are elements needed in every stirring American character. Other and different problems may be solved by the possession or development of the same qualities which made Commodore Perry successful in his own way on Lake Erie. The value of any possession largely depends upon the price that was paid for it.

It is with the hope of arousing not only the interest but also the courage, determination, and persistence of my boy-readers that I have written this story of the heroic work of the young naval leader so long ago.

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON.

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# THE BOY SAILORS OF 1812

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## CHAPTER I

### MORE'S DISCOVERY

“**B**RING your gun, Prudy! Be quick! Don’t wait a minute!”

“What’s the matter, Amos?”

“I suspect that More has treed the painter that killed the black calf last week. The dog is terribly excited and he won’t leave the old chestnut tree down by the bars. He’s tearing up the very earth around there!”

“Oh, More always was a dog of no sense,” responded Prudy, nevertheless taking a rifle from the rude frame in the kitchen where several guns were kept in readiness for instant use. “He’s probably treed a gray squirrel and makes as much noise about it as if he had captured Commodore Yeo.” In spite of her apparent lack of confidence in the family watch-dog, Prudy did not delay and at once departed with her brother from the little log house.

“It’s lucky mother doesn’t see us,” suggested

Prudy, as she and her companion ran swiftly along the path that led beyond the barn toward the unbroken woods in the distance. "That time when I shot that wolf last fall she said was to be my last." Prudy laughed as she spoke as if the stern decrees of her mother had been modified or were possessed of other elements than their manifest quality of command.

Together the brother and sister moved rapidly toward the place where More's noisy barking was much in evidence. The approaching twilight lent a sombre touch to the picture of the sturdy pair, for Prudy was almost as strong and quite as tall as her brother, Amos Proper. The fact that she was seventeen and almost two years older than Amos was a sufficient explanation of the resemblances and differences between the two as well.

Behind them stood the little log house which their father, with such assistance as their mother and the older children could give, had, with his own hands erected and built of the logs, which his own strong arms had felled in the primeval forest. The place was all too small for the large family of the hardy pioneer for there were ten children to care for. Fortunately, so Silas Proper often said, he had just as many boys as he had girls. The upper floor of the house, because of this fact, had been made into two large rooms, that is if any room in the Proper abode might truthfully be termed "large,"—in one

of which had slept the five girls of the family, while the other was occupied by their five brothers. No one had thought of complaining, however, for in 1813 on the shores of Lake Ontario the settlers were few in number and their possessions were even less.

However, the Propers had for more than ten years been busy in subduing the neighboring wilderness. Trees had been felled, stumps had been burned, and the land had been broken in places where certain crops had been planted. From before sunrise until the sun set the boys toiled in the fields or forest with their father. The three cows were milked by the girls and much of the hoeing also was done by them. The life was hard, the struggle was continuous but in spite of the difficulties it had certain pleasures of its own.

The Proper family had come from "down east," a somewhat vague term applied alike to Albany or New England. With them it implied both, for one generation of Propers had broken away from the others when the grandfather of Amos had taken his young wife from their Connecticut home and journeyed far,—at least the journey seemed far when the household goods had to be transported in an ox-cart, through what practically was an unbroken wilderness,—to Dutchess County, New York. From this county in turn Amos's father and his wife had gone seeking the lands farther west, following the alluring reports of those who had been there before

them. And now a part of the third generation was moving on, still convinced that they could reach the receding frontier, followed eagerly by many and yet apparently destined never to be caught up with. Amos's older brothers, Hosea and Caleb, had, just as their own ancestors formerly had done, sought to overtake that promising region of "out west," which seemingly retreated before every advance.

Two of Amos's sisters also had gone into homes of their own and consequently the quarters in the log house now were less cramped than once they had been.

In addition to the brothers who had left the paternal house for good and all, Amos's two brothers, Jonathan and Hiram, were absent now together with their father, who had declared that he could not refuse when the country had called him so urgently,—and were taking their part for a time at least in the defense of their country against the invading British army. The time was 1813, and the War of 1812, sometimes called the second struggle of the American Colonies for their liberty, was now under full swing.

But neither Amos nor Prudy was thinking of the war that morning in April, when with their guns in their hands they were running toward the place where More was noisily proclaiming his wrath over the discovery of an enemy of some kind among the tall branches of the huge chestnut tree, that stood alone near the bars of the pasture.

Amos Proper, fifteen years of age, tall and strong, had eyes of the same color as his sister and some of his features were strikingly like hers. There was the same resemblance in the color of the eyes and hair, and if they had been dressed alike each might readily have passed for the other, so strong was the family likeness.

Swiftly the boy and his sister drew near the bars which kept their three cows in the "pasture," so called at least, though not much grass as yet had appeared. Ordinarily the cattle were allowed to roam in the woods and there find such scanty food as they might obtain. Old Betsy, the leader of the trio, wore a cow-bell dangling from her neck by means of which the roaming cattle were located when they wandered too far afield. Old Betsy now lifted her head and gazed curiously at Amos and Prudy, as they sped across the pasture.

"If she knew we were after the painter that ate up her calf last week she wouldn't be as quiet as she is now," said Amos.

"You'd better look out that the painter doesn't eat *you*," retorted Prudy. "I guess the painter will turn out to be a squirrel," she added tartly.

"Old More never made a fuss like that over any squirrel," exclaimed Amos in a low voice as the dog's excitement became more manifest. His barking had changed, his cries had passed into a series of wild

howlings and a succession of prolonged yelps or screams followed.

"Come on, Prudy!" urged Amos. "More may get torn to pieces if you don't get there pretty soon."

"I shan't be very far away when you begin," retorted the girl; but she spoke more quietly and it was manifest from her manner that her interest and perhaps her excitement as well were increasing. More's cries had passed into a series of loud howlings and whatever it might be that he had treed it was clear that he at least firmly believed that danger was threatening.

"It isn't any squirrel," said Amos a moment later.

"What is it, then?" demanded his sister.

"I'll tell you what it is— Look at that dog!" Amos broke in sharply. "I don't know whether he's scared or just savagely mad. I never heard him make such a racket. It's surely something up in the old chestnut tree."

"That's plain enough, but what is it?"

"Is your flint all right?"

"Yes," replied Prudy, as she stopped and examined the heavy old flintlock she was carrying. "How is yours?" she added sharply.

"Mine's all right. Now then, you keep close behind me. If it's a painter we ought to fire one at a time. If I miss then you take him."

"No, let's both fire together. We'll be sure to get him that way."

"No! No! An army doesn't fire every gun at once. It keeps some for—what is that up in the old chestnut?" exclaimed Amos abruptly breaking in upon himself and looking curiously at the tree now only a few yards distant.

"I don't see anything," said Prudy.

"Well, More does, anyway," said Amos sharply as the noisy yelping of the dog increased in volume as soon as he caught sight of his approaching friends.

"He thinks he does."

"He knows he does! Look at him! Why he almost climbs that tree!"

"I guess he wouldn't if there was a painter there."

"There's something there anyway," said Amos. "You stay here while I creep up a little closer and see what I can see."

"I'm going, too, if you go," declared Prudy positively.

"All right, sis, keep your gun—what is it?" Amos was pointing to an object that was almost midway up the tree and partly concealed by the trunk.

"It's a man."

"I believe it is," assented Amos.

"I know it is."

"Hi, there! What are you doing up in that tree?" called Amos loudly.

Instead of replying the man in the treetop apparently was striving desperately to gain a position in which he would be more fully protected.

“Who are you?” again shouted Amos.

And still no response to the hail was made.

“Come down from that tree and give us an account of yourself,” ordered Amos loudly. The silence that followed was unbroken, except by the wild shrieks of More.

“I’ll give you till I count three,” again Amos shouted, as he raised his gun to his shoulder. In war time along the shore of the lake every man who could not prove that he was a friend was looked upon as an enemy and often treated as such.

“Don’t shoot!” called the man in the tree.

“Then come down!”

“Call off your dog and I will.”

“All right! Take More and don’t let him come near here,” said Amos turning quickly to his sister.

As soon as Prudy had seized More by the collar and dragged him to a spot from which she still could see what was taking place about the base of the chestnut tree and yet could keep the dog, whose hair was on end, where he could not attack the stranger, Amos called again.

“Come down now. The dog won’t touch you.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yes. Come down!”

"You won't shoot, will you?"

"Not unless you make me. Don't wait. Come on down."

Slowly the stranger descended from his place of refuge. As he came within Amos's sight the boy at first thought the man was old and feeble. A moment later he decided that he was only a boy, but when at last the stranger slid to the ground, Amos could not determine whether the stranger was a boy or man. His clothing was in tatters, his hair was long and unkempt, his feet were bare and there were bruises and various marks on his face.

"Tell me who are you," begged the stranger, as Amos drew near holding his gun in readiness although it was plain that the stranger not only was unarmed, but also was very weak.

"Better tell me first who you are," retorted Amos.

"Tell me where I am, then."

"Don't you know?"

"No. I don't know. Tell me where I am."

Amos's suspicions increased as he looked still more intently at the strange man before him. The boy now was convinced that the visitor was young, not more than twenty years of age. There was an expression of fear about him that was not altogether due to the strangeness of the present meeting. Indeed, Amos somehow was convinced that the man had a hunted look and was in continual fear of enemies whom he could not see, for he repeatedly

glanced behind him after the manner of some one who was fearful of danger from that direction.

The clothing of the man though tattered and torn was also a source of suspicion in Amos's mind, for in spite of its forlorn appearance he was convinced that the garb was that of a British sailor, though it was faded and worn almost beyond recognition. The fears of the lad naturally tended to increase his watchfulness, and he glanced at Prudy and More to make certain they were both beyond the reach of peril. The dog was emitting an occasional low growl now but he was no longer yelping,—apparently satisfied that he had done his full duty in holding the enemy in the tree and preventing him from doing any harm.

“You're on the shore of Lake Ontario,” said Amos at last answering the question of the strange being before him.

“Yes, yes, I know,” responded the stranger excitedly. “I know that. I can't forget it,” he added with a shudder as once more he peered fearfully behind him. “But how far are we from York?”

“York? York? Why York is straight across the lake from here.”

“No. No. That can't be. You're not telling me the truth.”

“Yes, I am.”

“Then I'm on the American shore?”

“The United States of America, just as sure as you're born,” replied Amos lightly. Somehow his

alarm was less now as he saw that his prisoner was incapable of harm. Indeed his manner was so strange that Amos was beginning to believe that he either was lacking in some parts of his mental equipment or was terrified by some experience through which he had passed recently.

"I'm glad," said the stranger after a brief hesitation and sighing heavily as he spoke. "Yes, I am."

"Where did you come from? Where do you belong? What is your name? When—"

"Give me time to get my breath and I'll tell you all about it," broke in the stranger. "I can't tell you everything at once."

"Tell me, then, what you were doing up in that chestnut tree," demanded Amos.

"Keeping away from that dog," explained the man looking again at More, whom Prudy still was holding by his collar. "Can you keep him from biting?"

"I guess I can if he thinks you are friendly."

"I am," declared the man promptly.

"Where did you come from?"

"Tell me again if you are sure I am on the New York shore."

"You surely are."

"And you are friendly to the United States?"

"Friendly? Friendly? I'm more than a friend. I've got a father and two brothers in the United States army, and I ought to be there myself."

“Good! Then I guess you’re all right.”

“Go ahead and tell us who you are. I can’t stay here all day.”

“And I don’t want to, either.”

“You’re not going to if I have anything to say about it. Hurry up, now.”

“Where is your house?”

“Not very far away.”

“You say your father and two brothers are in the army?”

“That’s just what I said.”

“Then are you and this girl all that are home?”

“Why? What do you want to know that for?”

“Just to make sure, that’s all.”

“Sure of what?”

“That—that—” The man suddenly staggered and would have fallen if Amos had not instantly dropped his gun and seized him in his arms.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMING OF THE BRITISH

“PRUDY, take my gun,” called Amos sharply to his sister. The girl still not altogether free from suspicion of the stranger took the rifle from the ground, but even as she did so she was not able to repress her warning. “Look out, Amos,” she said in a low voice. “He may be trying a trick on you.”

Amos laughed scornfully as he placed one arm through his strange visitor’s and at once turned back toward the house.

“What shall we do with him?” asked Prudy.

“Get him where he can be looked after,” replied Amos gruffly.

“But he’s a British sailor,” protested the girl.

“I don’t care if he’s Satan’s worst imp, he isn’t going to come to our house in any such shape as he is in now and not be taken care of—for a while anyway,” he added.

“But he’s covered with—all sorts of things,” exclaimed the girl, unable entirely to repress her feeling of revulsion as she looked at the disgusting appearance of the man whom Amos was assisting to move slowly up the lane.

And the feeling of Prudy was not unnatural. In addition to the ragged condition of his clothing, the man was indescribably filthy. Where he had been to be placed in such a plight, the girl, who had been trained by her mother to abhor even the appearance of "dirt," was unable to conjecture. With a lake full of such clear water as Lake Ontario boasted, at least the outer coating of his filth might have been removed, she declared. Prudy's feeling of disgust was almost instinctive.

"Can't help it," maintained Amos sturdily, "he's got to be looked after. He's almost dead. Better save your breath and run on to the house and tell mother we're bringing her a visitor."

Prudy, nothing loath, at once began to run, the dog following closely though he occasionally stopped and glanced questioningly back at Amos as if he was undecided just where his presence was most needed.

Before Amos and his helpless captive or visitor (for the boy as yet was not able to decide to which character the man really belonged) arrived at the house he saw his mother and Prudy running swiftly to meet him.

"Who is it, Amos?" inquired his mother as she drew near.

"I don't know."

"Prudy says he was up in the old chestnut tree."

"He was."

"Can't he talk?"

"No, he fainted or got sick after he came down out of the tree. I think he's sick. You'd better put him in a bed."

"Not yet," said Mrs. Proper decidedly. "He'd ruin any bed I have. Take him to the barrel first."

Mrs. Proper's "Barrel" was a receptacle for rain-water which, in a storm, ran from the roof of the house. Near it stood a rude bench upon which a wooden bowl was left and near by was a small keg filled with "soft" soap. Here most of the daily ablutions of the Proper family were accomplished, and the directions of Amos's mother were accordingly born of her first impulse when she saw the forlorn condition of the unexpected arrival.

The stranger, however, apparently was unmindful of what was said about him or done to him. His head had fallen forward and his pitiful weakness was so manifest that not even Prudy was able to retain the suspicions she had cherished.

"Pocr man," murmured the girl. "Let me help you, Amos," she volunteered as he advanced to take an arm of the swaying stranger.

"Keep away," ordered Amos tartly. "Go and get an old quilt," he added abruptly.

"What for?"

"Do as Amos tells you," added Mrs. Proper. "Get the old blanket that is hanging on the peg in the boys' room."

By the time Amos had led or rather carried the

man to the barrel the girl had returned with the blanket.

"Now leave me here. No! Go upstairs and get me some of Caleb's clothes. I guess they'll about fit this man," ordered Amos.

"There isn't any 'some' of Caleb's clothes. You talk as if he had a room full."

"Get something, anyway."

The girl turned away as she had been bidden while her mother entered the house and brought out a large, coarse towel which she herself had woven from the flax grown on the clearing. "Will you put him in the corner, Amos?" she inquired as she was about to turn away.

"I don't know yet. I'm not sure but that I'd better get a hoe to use on this fellow first," said Amos grimly, as he once more glanced down at the stranger whom he had stretched upon the ground. The utterly wretched and repulsive appearance now was more manifest than before, but the closed eyes, emaciated cheeks and manifest misery of the motionless man were also much more in evidence.

"There's no other way out of it," declared Amos stoutly. "Hoe or broom, I've got to work on him as if I were currycombing a horse. Mother, you get something for him to eat while I'm fixing him up. I guess he needs something inside of him almost as much as he needs soap and water on the outside."

For a long time Amos worked busily over the help-

less stranger. The man did not protest and indeed tried to help, though every moment his state of exhaustion became more manifest. Who or what he was he had not as yet explained, but at last when Amos ceased his vigorous labors and assisted him to don some of Caleb's clothing, he wrapped him in the blanket which Mrs. Proper had provided and bidding his guest remain on the steps of the corner-crib he himself turned to the house.

In a brief time he returned with a wooden bowl filled with "mush and milk," which he at once handed the man. Without a word the stranger almost seized the food and then ate so ravenously that in a short time the dish again was empty.

"More?" inquired Amos, smiling as he spoke.

"Yes, I want more,—"

"You can have all you want."

"You are very good, but I mustn't eat more now. Do you know how long it has been since I have tasted any victuals?"

"No. How long has it been?"

"I don't just know, either, but I guess it must be three days."

"What?"

"Yes." The man spoke in a low voice and repeatedly glanced about him in a manner that betrayed great fear though the cause of his alarm was not manifest to Amos. "I don't know just how long, but I guess it's about that," he repeated. "I've

been in the skiff three nights. I'm sure of that, anyway."

"Well," laughed Amos lightly, "if you were there three nights I don't believe you left the boat in the daytime or between spells. Where did you come from?"

The man hesitated and looked questioningly at the boy before him. "Do you mind," he said at last, "if I wait before I tell you? You have been good to me, but I'd rather wait a bit before I tell you who I am."

"Are you a British—"

"Don't say a word now," broke in the stranger. "Would you mind if I took this blanket and had a nap in this cornerib?"

"No! No!" interrupted the stranger as Amos suggested his coming into the house. "I don't want a bed. I don't want to go inside the house. This cornerib is just the place. Of course if any men should come here looking for me you won't tell them where I am, will you?" The man's voice was almost like that of a child pleading for protection.

"Who'd come?" said Amos lightly. "Sometimes we don't see the face of anybody except the members of our family for three weeks at a time."

"That's good!" exclaimed the stranger. "I'll tell you all in a little while. There's just one thing more," he added almost pathetically. "I wonder if

you would mind promising me that you'd keep a little on the watch. If you would and then would let me know if anybody—any strangers—”

“Soldiers?” interrupted Amos.

“Yes, soldiers, or—or—anybody,—if you'd just promise me that you'd let me know if you should see any coming toward the house, why I could get away then, and I'd never forget it of you! Never!”

“Which soldiers, redcoats, or—”

“Any kind.”

Amos was perplexed but the appeal of the man was too urgent to be resisted and the boy promised. As soon as he saw that the man had climbed back among the ears of corn he turned away and went back to the house.

“Who is your visitor?” inquired Prudy of her brother when he entered.

“I don't know.”

“I'm afraid your friend is fooling you.”

“How is he fooling me?” demanded Amos sharply.

“I'm glad my name is not ‘Prudence,’ anyway. I'd hate to be thinking always of the wrong side—”

“Don't quarrel, children,” broke in Mrs. Proper smilingly. “We have too serious matters to think of now to waste any time over such things.”

“But who is the man?” persisted Prudy.

“I told you I don't know.”

“Why didn't you find out?”

“He is too nearly dead to talk now. He has

crawled into the corner and gone to sleep. When he wakes up he'll tell us all about it."

"Or set fire to the house, or steal our sheep, or—"

"He doesn't look just now," interrupted Mrs. Proper, "as if he was in a condition to do any very violent deeds. He's a poor, miserable-looking man."

"He may be putting it all on, mother," said Prudy. "Nobody knows what he may do before morning. He may shoot us all in our beds—"

The girl stopped abruptly as a long, low growl from More startled the little group. Every hair on the back of the dog apparently was on end and he was standing in the open doorway looking toward the pasture from which Amos and his sister had recently come.

"What is it, More?" demanded Amos.

The growls were repeated but the dog did not move from his position.

"He sees something," said the boy in a low voice.

"Better say he hears something. Probably it's another painter," laughed Prudy.

Meanwhile Mrs. Proper had slipped outside the door and looked toward the corner, but their visitor was not to be seen.

"It's something that More doesn't like. I guess I'll go out and see what it is," suggested Amos.

"And leave the women folk to their own danger?" asked Prudy demurely, though her eyes were sparkling with fun as she spoke. Her demure and seri-

ous-minded younger brother was at once her special pride and torment.

"If you begin to talk I guess there won't anything stay around very long," retorted Amos. "I'll go out and see what it is that has stirred up More. I never saw him act so before. He has begun the day—Hello!" Amos sharply broke in upon himself. He was standing in the doorway and looking toward the distant pasture.

Impressed by his manifest interest, both Prudy and her mother advanced to his side and looked eagerly in the direction in which Amos was pointing.

For a moment all three were silent. Just emerging from the woods was a band of a half dozen men. They were still so far distant that it was not possible to discern their uniforms though from the way in which they were moving it was plain that they were coming toward the house.

"Who are they?" whispered Prudy at last.

"I guess they're from that British brig I've seen off and on for the past three days," said Amos. "I didn't think they'd have the impudence to land—"

"Maybe they're after this man," abruptly suggested Prudy.

"That's so. I hadn't thought of that," said Amos sharply. "What shall we do?"

"You look after these fellows if they stop here," said Prudy quickly. "I'll look after the man they want." As she spoke the girl seized a wooden bowl

in which she placed some corn and at once leaving the house, went to a place near the corner-crib and began calling the hens about her.

"Those men will come here," said Mrs. Proper as she glanced once more at the little approaching band. "Don't show that you are afraid of them, Amos, but don't do anything to arouse their anger. I shall go about my work and you'd better be busy, too. I don't think they have seen us as yet."

As his mother turned back into the room, Amos looked at the guns that were in the rack on the wall, but instead of taking any from its place he went to the woodpile in the rear of the house and taking an axe began his daily task of splitting wood for the fireplace.

He saw that his sister had left open the door of the corner-crib and he started toward the place to make the door secure again but as he did so Prudy ran to him to protest. "Leave the door just as it is!" she ordered.

"Why? The man is in there and—"

"I know he is in there and that is just why I want the door left open."

"They'll find him."

"No, they won't, at least if the crib looks as if we didn't care if they examined it, the men will be less likely to think there is anybody hiding in it."

"Is the man still in there?" whispered Amos.

"Yes, he's under that pile of bags," replied Prudy,

pointing to some coarse sacks that were thrown in apparent confusion about the place. "Go back to your chopping," she suggested. "I'm busy feeding the chickens, you see."

Amos did as he was bidden, but while he was lustily swinging his axe he was keenly watching his sister who was scattering some kernels of corn on the ground manifestly as much to the delight as it was to the surprise of the hens at being fed at this untimely hour.

And yet both the boy and his sister were listening intently for the sound of approaching men, and several times Amos ran to the corner of the house and cautiously peered at the band.

There was now no question as to their destination. The men had turned from the lane and were only a few rods distant. The sight was more than Amos was able to endure calmly. Calling to his dog to keep closely to his side he shouldered his axe and advanced to the front of the house where he awaited the coming of the men, who now he saw were clad in the uniform of the British navy.

"Here's our man," said one of the approaching force as he saw Amos. "Tell me, lad, have you seen any one to-day?"

"I have seen my mother and my sister and—"

The men laughed and the ensign who had spoken said sharply, "I mean has any man been here of late?"

“Yes, sir.”

“When?”

“About four days ago, my father—”

Again the men laughed and the face of the young spokesman flushed. “We’re looking for a man that got away from the *Duke of Gloucester*—a gunboat of His Majesty—”

“Was he one of the crew or a prisoner?” asked Amos glancing behind him as his mother advanced and took a position by his side.

“He’ll be both when we get him,” said the leader angrily. “Have you seen him?”

“Did he wear a British uniform?”

“I fancy he did.”

“I guess you’ll have to look somewhere else. I don’t believe a redcoat would dare show himself around here. He’d be in trouble in short order.”

“That’s where you may be yourself if you don’t curb that tongue of yours.”

“What is it you wish?” spoke up Mrs. Proper quickly.

“One of our men has escaped. We suspect he is somewhere hereabouts. Have you seen a stranger hiding?”

“If a man were ‘hiding’ I probably should not ‘see’ him,” said Mrs. Proper demurely.

“It is too serious a matter, madam, to be trifling about it. We want our man and shall have to search your place.”

“You would not do that if my husband and my boys were here,” dauntlessly said the woman.

“We take our chances,” retorted the ensign tartly. “I am convinced you have seen our man. If you give him up or inform me where he can be found we shall not trouble you more.”

“I do not know that I have seen the man you want but even if I had I should never betray him to your press-gangs.”

“Have a care, madam,” said the officer warningly.

“I have had little else but ‘care’ since you began your work on the lake.”

“You may have more.”

“I do not know how that is. I have a husband and four sons who are—”

“Did you see our man?” interrupted the leader.

“I saw a man some time ago who looked as if he had been seized by one of your press-gangs. He was ragged and dirty and his suffering must have been horrible.”

“How long ago did you see him?”

“Let me see—I think it was sometime this week. Wasn’t it, Amos?” she inquired as she turned to her boy.

“I guess so, if you mean the beggar that More treed.”

The ensign abruptly turned to his companions and angrily said, “The woman is hiding him. We’ll have to search the place. Come on, boys.”

## CHAPTER III

### FLIGHT

**I**GNORING the protests of Mrs. Proper and laughing at the threats of Amos, the band at once began a hurried search of the premises. The peril of a landing party of British sailors on the shore was comparatively slight, because only a few scattered hamlets or homes were to be found in the entire region. Nevertheless the leader was eager to be gone and several times urged his followers to quicken their efforts.

The house first was entered, and while two men went to the cellar, two more sought the upper rooms while still another busily inspected the rooms below. All through the search one man remained as guard and watched just outside the door.

The indignation of Amos became keener as he saw the destructive work of the visitors. Boxes were smashed, doors broken down and slight regard was had for the rights or feelings of the family. Even the guns were taken from the rack and appropriated to their own use.

Amos Proper was a sturdy lad, mature for his

years, for unusual responsibilities had been placed on his boyish shoulders in the absence from home of his father and older brothers. The rugged life of a pioneer also had developed his self-reliance and the heavy labors of those early days had made his muscles firm and strong. He was not without confidence, too, in his own ability to meet existing conditions. The result of these combined forces was that, as Amos watched the men prowling about the place, looking in the house and barns for the man for whom they were searching, his anger steadily increased until at last he decided to try to do something to thwart them.

In apparent carelessness he dropped the heavy door at the outside entrance to the cellar into its place and heavily barred it as soon as the men departed from the house to continue their search. He waited a brief time till his visitors passed the cornerib which they concluded after a hasty inspection could not be the hiding place of the man they wanted.

“Did you find anything in the cellar?” Amos asked in a low voice of two of the sailors when they turned from the cornerib toward the barn.

“No.”

“Did you see that barrel of cider in the corner of the cellar?”

“No,” responded one of the men promptly. “Is there a barrel there?”

“There was a little while ago. I guess it’s still there.”

"Come on, Tom. We'll go back," said one of the men eagerly to his companion.

"The cider is pretty 'hard,' " suggested Amos.

"All the better," laughed the sailor as he looked toward the other members of the party who now were entering the barn. "We didn't get a good look at that cellar, mate," he added as he winked at his companion. Quickly the two sailors, quietly followed by Amos, returned to the house and speedily ran down the low cellar stairs.

"In the southwest corner," whispered Amos who was close behind the men.

No sooner had the eager sailors darted down the stairway, than Amos noiselessly closed the heavy cellar door and dropped the heavy bar into its socket. Both men were now shut in the damp, dark, underground room.

Waiting a brief time to ascertain whether or not the two men realized that they had been shut in, and as the silence was unbroken, Amos quickly concluded that the sailors either were too intent upon finding the "southwest corner," or that they had no suspicion as yet of their predicament, and then he ran hastily toward the barn.

There he found his visitors ransacking the place. Only a small amount of hay remained in the mow but it all had been turned over in the search for the missing man.

As Amos entered, the leader said harshly, "It will

be better for you, young man, if you tell us where he is."

"Who?" inquired Amos blandly.

"Don't stop to talk! Tell us where he is," retorted the sailor angrily.

"I can't do that."

"You can, but you won't. Well, I fancy we'll have to make the bird sing that won't." Stepping quickly forward he seized Amos by the wrist of his right hand, and began to twist it. But the lad was almost as strong as his tormentor, and thrusting out his foot suddenly he pushed his assailant over it and at the same time wrenched himself free, and darted toward the open door.

Springing to his feet the chagrined sailor, now furiously angry, darted after the fleeing lad. Around and around the barn ran pursuer and pursued, Amos doing his utmost to escape while his enemy's anger increased. The boy now realized how foolish he had been to interfere with the work of his visitors. His better plan would have been to leave them free to do as they chose in the hope that soon they would depart for their boat which he was confident had been left on shore.

Suddenly Amos was aware that a companion of his pursuer had joined in the chase and that one was approaching while the other was not far behind. Turning sharply he dashed toward the woods in the distance. He was aware of his peril for either of the

men might use his gun. But the decision was made before he had time for thought and fear provided an additional incentive.

“Stop! Stop or I’ll shoot!” called the angry sailor.

Ignoring the command Amos glanced hastily over his shoulder and saw the man raising his gun. The moment was critical but the lad was in too desperate a plight to falter. Exerting himself to the utmost of his strength he ran on, expecting every moment to hear the report of the gun.

For some reason which he was not able to understand, there was no discharge. Had the flint fallen from the lock? That must be the true cause, he concluded, and, as he was aware that he was unharmed, he found himself near the old chestnut tree in which the wretched man whom the sailors from the gunboat were seeking, first had concealed himself.

For a moment he was tempted to seek the same refuge, but the fear of his armed pursuers was too keen and he kept on his way toward the woods beyond.

Once within the shelter of the great trees he felt safer. As he looked before him he saw the blue waters of Lake Ontario sparkling in the sunlight. Directly in front of him, drawn up on a small sandy beach, he saw the yawl in which his visitors had come ashore. The sight instantly suggested a plan. He ran hastily



HE WRENCHED HIMSELF FREE, AND DARTED TOWARD THE OPEN DOOR.—*Page 41.*



to the boat and exerting all his strength he endeavored to push it back into the water, but his efforts were unavailing. The boat was too heavy.

Looking behind him into the forest he could not see any of his pursuers. Perhaps they had abandoned the chase and had gone back to join in the search for the man for whom they had come ashore. The conviction that in any event his enemies soon would be returning to the shore provided an incentive for renewed exertion.

The boat, however, was too heavy for Amos alone to move. Several attempts convinced him of his inability and he was about to abandon the attempt when he saw not far distant on the shore several round logs not more than three inches in diameter and about four feet in length. Instantly he secured them and after a hard struggle succeeded in placing one of them under the bow of the yawl. Then throwing his strength against the little boat he succeeded in moving his craft a short distance. By alternately placing the other "rollers" in front he at last pushed the yawl into the water and then hastily scrambled on board.

In a moment he seized an oar and began to scull. He had gone only a few yards when for the first time he became aware of a gunboat not more than a quarter mile out in the lake. The vessel apparently was cruising about without any particular destination and

as Amos watched her he concluded that she was waiting for the return of the half-dozen men who had come to his home.

He was between two perils now. If his seizure of the yawl should be seen by the crew of the gunboat another boat might be sent in pursuit of him. At the same time the band might at any moment return to the shore and discover his seizure of their yawl. Either horn of the dilemma was perilous and in desperation Amos put forth all his strength.

The clumsy craft moved slowly but there was comfort in the thought that it was moving. Steadily he guided it around the little point of land to the west. There at least he would be shut out from the sight of his enemies. Beyond the point was a little cove which Amos well knew. If only he could run the boat in there he could hide it, he was convinced, so effectually that not even its owners would be able to find it among the heavy overhanging bushes that lined the shores.

Perspiration now was streaming down the face of the eager and excited boy. Not for a moment were his efforts relaxed. The clumsy yawl rolled and turned but all the time was driven slowly, though steadily, ahead. Glancing behind him as he arrived at the mouth of the cove Amos saw that apparently he was the only one on that part of the lake. The water was shallow now and the lad began to pole. He drove his boat within the shelter of the bushes

and then not satisfied that he was safe, sent it several rods farther.

At last he could go no farther. Cautiously he slipped ashore and then made the yawl fast to a nearby tree. His enemies were without any means of returning to the gunboat he thought grimly as he began to pick his way among the trees. He was going back to the house to see how it fared with his mother and sister. The thought that by taking their boat he might compel his visitors to remain on the shore was somewhat disquieting but Amos did not stop. He knew his way in all the region and pushed steadily forward until once more the old chestnut tree stood before him.

As he looked at his home in the distance he was unable to see any one near it. Several minutes elapsed and still no one appeared. Had the men gone? Had anything happened to his sister and mother? The questions were pressing and the eager boy was about to start toward the house, when suddenly he saw Prudy come out of the building followed by one of the marauding band. Amos watched them as they both stopped and seemed to be holding an animated conversation. The sailor was gesticulating excitedly but as Amos was too far distant to hear what was said he of course was unable to discover the subject of the conversation. Fearful of harm coming to his sister he watched and waited, resolved that if she should be in danger he would rush

to her aid, no matter what his own peril might be. But in a brief time both Prudy and her visitor re-entered the house. Their action was mysterious and the anxiety of Amos increased. A wait of several minutes did not bring any solution. The silence that rested over the region was unbroken. The April sunshine was warm and mellow and the green that was beginning to appear on the trees and in the fields changed its tints as an occasional passing cloud intercepted the light of the sun.

Unable to repress his anxiety longer, Amos, by a circuitous route, began to draw nearer the house. This was not difficult for the woods were on every side of the little clearing. The crows seemed curious as to his purpose in moving so hastily among the trees and noisily proclaimed their protests or questions. Otherwise the continued silence was ominous and Amos's determination to go back to the house was strengthened. He felt that he must be with his mother and sister no matter what the consequences to himself might be.

Still he did not abandon his cautious approach. From the woods he managed to enter the barn and a brief inspection convinced him that no one was there. From the barn he moved to the shelter of the corn-crib, where he waited several minutes without hearing any sound from the house. But the very silence itself was oppressive. He was confident that the man whom he had seen with Prudy had not left the place.

How many others might be there too he could only conjecture. Were the two men whom he had shut in the cellar still there?

At last unable longer to endure the suspense, Amos crept stealthily toward the kitchen. As he gained the window he slowly raised himself and peered within. To his amazement he saw Prudy and the young leader of the British band seated at the rude table and the latter was engaged in a simple repast.

Instantly Amos's anger blazed forth and without any further consideration for his own safety he turned to the door, opened it abruptly and boldly entered the room.

The young sailor leaped to his feet at the unexpected appearance and reached for his pistol which had been placed on the table.

"Where have you been, Amos?" inquired Prudy quietly as she explained to her guest that the entering boy was her brother.

"Where is mother?" abruptly demanded Amos.

"She's here," replied Prudy.

"Is she hurt?"

"No. What makes you think she was hurt?"

"I didn't know," replied Amos glancing at the young man as he spoke.

"We aren't harming the Yankee women," said the sailor.

"How long since?" retorted Amos warmly. His feeling toward the enemy was strong and not unlike

that in which his father and brothers and indeed the entire country, for the matter of that, shared.

"Never," said the sailor quietly, though the color in his cheeks deepened as he spoke.

"Humph!" remarked Amos. "Have the men gone?"

"All but one."

"This one?" inquired Amos glancing at their visitor.

"Yes."

"Why doesn't he go too?"

"I'm waiting for the man we came for. My word! You ought to keep a civil tongue in your head," said the young sailor.

"I can't," retorted Amos. "There are too many of the redcoats hereabouts."

"They'll teach you better manners."

"You mean your press-gangs will teach us? They're the most we have seen since the war began. You're about the first man that has dared come ashore and you wouldn't do it either if my father or brothers were here!"

"Your insolence—"

"Don't mind a little thing like that," broke in the boy to whom the sight of an officer in the opposing fleet was a source of bitter anger.

"What I want to know is what you are staying here in our house for?"

"Amos!" protested Prudy, "you ought—"

"Yes, I know I ought," broke in Amos angrily. "It seems to me that this fellow has good courage to come to a house where he isn't wanted and quarter himself on the people."

"You ought to be treated with the cat—" began the young officer angrily.

"Does every press-gang carry a cat-o'-nine-tails along with it?"

"We take only what belongs to us,—whether it's men or other things."

"Where are the rest of your gang?" Amos was confident that he had little to fear from the boyish leader and consequently his boldness increased.

"Gone back to the *Duke of Gloucester*."

"Is that the name of the tub off the shore?"

"Have a care,—" warned the sailor still more angrily.

"Oh, I have plenty of 'care,'" retorted Amos. "We've had it ever since you came over here. Are all your men gone?"

"Yes."

"And you're the only one left here?"

"I fancy I am."

"Did you get the man that you were chasing?"

"Not yet."

"Why not?"

"We haven't found him—yet."

"He was about as stout as a picked chicken," laughed Amos derisively. "His clothes were all torn

to pieces. They looked like a string of holes tied together. He was so weak he couldn't run. How long have your men been chasing him?"

"Upon my word," said the young sailor now genuinely aroused. "You appear to be quite well informed about this man. Perhaps you will help us—"

"Oh, I'll help you if you'll get seven more of your crew to join in. You ought to have a baker's dozen to get one poor fellow like that. Was he a volunteer, or was he one that your press-gang got? He looked as if he had had a visit from the pirates."

"You are an insolent young cub!"

"Tastes differ. Now if I had six able-bodied sailors from the *Duke of Gloucester* to help me, and yet I couldn't catch one poor, starved, good-for-nothing man that got away, I'd go straight to Admiral Yeo and tell him he ought to get the whole British fleet under weigh."

"Amos, you have said enough!"

The boy glanced at the open doorway as the suggestion was quietly made by his mother, who was standing there. "All right, ma'am," he said cheerfully. "I was just explaining to His Majesty," and the boy tauntingly bowed low to the furious young sailor, "that they ought to have more men if they want to get that poor fellow, who came here. I guess he's the one they are after. Six men aren't enough to take a British tar. If he was a Yankee, they'd need a dozen."

"He is a Yankee," said the sailor.

"No wonder he got away from you then! But what I'd like to know is, if he's a Yankee what is he doing on a British gunboat?"

"What we tell him to do."

"You must have told him a good deal, if his looks went for anything."

"Amos!" warned his mother.

"Yes, ma'am," again replied the boy.

"Go and bring up the cows."

"Where is More?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen him since—"

Mrs. Proper stopped abruptly as three men clad in the uniform of the British navy at that moment entered the door.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRESS-GANG

THE approaching men were quickly recognized as a part of the band which had come to the house earlier in the day. Amos was stealthily attempting to withdraw but as he watched the visitors he saw that they were seriously troubled and his curiosity speedily overcame his fears though he still remained standing near the kitchen-door prepared for flight if occasion demanded it.

“What’s the trouble?” demanded the young leader as he faced his men.

“Yawl’s gone,” responded one of the sailors touching his hat as he spoke.

“Gone? What do you mean?”

“It’s gone, sir.”

“Where did you leave it?”

“On the beach.”

“And it isn’t there now?”

“That’s what it isn’t, sir.”

“It must have got afloat.”

“Beggin’ your pardon, sir, Tom, here says as how he knows and so do I that couldn’t be so.”

“But it must!”

The sailor was silent, feeling perhaps there was nothing more to be said.

Amos's excitement now was keen and in his eagerness he pressed forward until he could see the faces of the chagrined sailors. His own expression, however, was blank, but his look of innocence did not deceive his sister who glanced keenly at him and scowled.

"What's to be did, sir?" inquired the sailor simply.

"Where are Jack and Sim?" inquired the ensign.

"Beg pardon, sir, but we was thinkin' mayhap they was with you."

"Didn't they go with you?"

"No, sir."

"Where are they?"

"That's what we would like to know, sir."

"Do you believe they took the yawl?"

"Can't say, sir, as to that."

"You haven't seen them?"

"Not since we left this place."

"How long ago was that?"

"Better than a couple o' hours."

"Where have you been?"

"Lookin' for the yawl, sir."

"Did you try each direction on the beach?"

"We did, sir."

"And didn't you find any trace of it?"

"We did not, sir."

"It's strange," murmured the young leader greatly perplexed. Suddenly as he looked up he discovered a grin on the face of Amos and he said abruptly, "Boy, do you know where the yawl is?"

"If I did I wouldn't tell you," declared Amos boldly.

"I believe you know something about it."

"I believe he do too, sir," said the sailor eagerly. "We chased the lad to the shore but he gave us the slip. He couldn't 'a' launched the yawl alone. There must have been somebody along with him," he suggested.

"Tell me, lad, who helped you?" inquired the young leader quickly as he turned once more to Amos.

"Nobody."

"Beggin' pardon, sir, he couldn't 'a' lifted the boat alone."

"I didn't say I did," retorted Amos. "All I say was nobody helped me. And there wasn't anybody."

"Do you know where the yawl is?"

Amos was silent.

"Do you know where the yawl is?" again demanded the young leader.

Still Amos did not reply.

"Take the little rascal down to the shore!" ordered the ensign. As he spoke he stepped hastily behind the boy to prevent his escape by the door

and at the same time two of the sailors advanced and seized him by the shoulders. Before the family was fully aware of what was being done Amos was taken from the house. One of the men was left in charge of the place, while the ensign and the other two sailors with their prisoner were on their way to the place where the yawl had been left on the shore.

When the band arrived at the place they were seeking, the boat was not to be found. To all questions Amos was silent. Whatever the motive in the mind of the young leader may have been, when he compelled Amos to accompany him to the beach, the stubborn silence of his prisoner at last made him angry.

At his command a signal-fire was kindled on the shore and in a brief time a boat put out from the *Duke of Gloucester*. When at last the approaching yawl was driven on the shore, the ensign briefly explained the loss of their boat and expressed his opinion than some one had taken it.

"Get aboard," ordered the lieutenant, who in response to the signal had come ashore. "If the Yankees are prowling around here we don't want to get caught. Who's this?" he demanded as for the first time he noticed the presence of Amos.

"He's a lad who knows more than he will tell."

"About what?"

"Our yawl for one thing. His father and two of his brothers are in the Yankee fleet."

"And both my brothers-in-law!" spoke up Amos promptly.

"Why aren't you there, too?" inquired the officer smiling slightly at the boy's promptness.

"I'm going in the fall if any British are left on the lakes by that time."

The officer's smile changed to a scowl. "If you are so keen to go to sea why don't you serve in one of His Majesty's fleets?"

"I'm not an Englishman."

"Where did your father come from?"

"My grandfather came from Devonshire."

"Then he's a British subject."

"My father is an American!"

"No, sir. 'Once a Briton always a Briton.' I think we'll take you with us and place you where you belong."

Amos's face turned the color of chalk as he heard the officer's words. Protests were of no avail and besides he was too proud to beg, though the end was different from what he had expected. He regretted his bold words now. The thought of his sister and mother alone in the old house brought tears to his eyes. Suddenly he recalled the fact that the two men whom he had shut in the cellar had not been released. Where they were their calls for help would be smothered and it was more than doubtful if they could be heard outside the cellar.

The men were ill-natured over the loss of the yawl

and apparently also were fearful of the presence of enemies. At the lieutenant's word the yawl was manned, the additional men were seated and preparations made for a speedy return to the *Duke of Gloucester*. Amos had not spoken since he had received the word that he was to accompany the men. He stood waiting on the shore, not without hope that the lieutenant would not enforce his order.

"In you go!" ordered the officer as Amos still lingered.

"Let me go back home," pleaded Amos. "My mother and sister—"

"They can look to those bold Yankees who are guarding the shore," interrupted the officer with a brutal laugh.

"But I can't do much, if you do take me."

"In you go!" roared the irritated man. "We haven't any time to waste here on crying brats! Get aboard!" To emphasize his order the lieutenant bestowed a kick on the trembling boy, and then roughly pushed him into the boat where, as he fell over the men, each added a kick or cuff of his own.

The rough treatment aroused the troubled Amos. He would not let the men, whom his father and brothers were fighting, see his weakness, he said to himself. Crouching in the bow out of the way of the oarsmen, he was silent as he watched the receding shore. Each familiar spot took on a fresh meaning now. Just beyond the bend, around which a little while before

he had taken the British yawl, was a long bed of weeds, where he had caught several huge pickerel the preceding week. Up on the hill beyond the house were the maple trees, which in March he had tapped for their sap. Even the log house was attractive in the late afternoon sunlight. A wave of homesickness swept over the troubled boy that was almost more than he could endure.

By a supreme effort he controlled his feelings and stolidly watched the sailors as they swung back and forth in their labors at the oars. "Press-gang!" "Press-gang!" "Press-gang!" the very oars seemed to be saying, as they creaked in the oarlocks. The men all looked the part, too, Amos thought, as he almost fell in with rhythm of the swaying bodies. They were a brave band—to seize a boy when no one was near to take his part. He decided that no matter how keenly he might suffer he would not give his captors the privilege of seeing his weakness.

Not a word was spoken by any one in the yawl until the boat drew near the *Duke of Gloucester*. In silence, too, the little craft was run alongside the larger vessel which had come up into the wind and with flapping sails was awaiting the coming of the yawl.

The lieutenant saluted the captain as he sprang upon the deck and at once explained that the other yawl which had been used by the first band in their search had been lost.

"Lost?" demanded the captain. "Do you mean the Yankees took it?"

"No, sir. It must have gotten adrift."

"Didn't the lubbers know enough to haul her up on the sand?"

"They say they hauled her twenty feet up from the lake."

"And yet lost her?"

"Yes, sir."

"They deserve the cat! They'll get it, too! That was the best yawl the *Duke of Gloucester* had. What have we here?" abruptly demanded the captain as he for the first time became aware of the presence of Amos on the deck.

"He's a lad we brought back with us. He lives near the shore and his father and brothers are in Chauncey's fleet."

"What did you bring him here for?"

"We can use him in place of the Yank that got away yesterday."

"He can't be much worse," grunted the captain. "Tell me, lad," he added turning to Amos, "what is your name?"

"Amos Proper."

"Your father is a Yankee?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where did your family come from?"

"Devonshire."

"Not much Yankee about that! These Devon-

shire Yankees make pretty good Jackies in our navy. Have you ever been to sea?"

"No, sir."

"You'd like to, I fancy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you make yourself useful aboard the *Duke of Gloucester* and there's no telling where you will bring up in the end." As Amos did not respond the captain added, "I'll speak a good word for you myself. To-morrow, I shall let you swab the deck. You can put him into the watch, to-night, Lieutenant Goodwin," he added as he turned away.

The boat was now under motion and apparently was headed for the open lake. Despite his anger and anxiety Amos noticed how trimly the vessel was built and how well she was handled. Her bow was cutting the blue waters of the lake almost like a knife. The breeze, which often died away as sunset drew near, now held steady and the gunboat almost like a thing alive sped toward the open waters of the lake.

Despite Amos's depression he noticed all these points as he followed the lieutenant forward. Indeed, the strangeness of his condition at the moment seemed to deaden the sense of his enforced departure from home. Even his feeling of anxiety for his mother and Prudy was something that belonged to some one else or to some other place.

He was roused from his numbness, however, when

the lieutenant said with a laugh, "We'll fit you out with a suit and make a Jackie of you before you can tell what happened."

"I'm not a Jackie! I shan't serve in the British navy! I don't—"

"You'll do what you're ordered," retorted the young officer sharply.

Amos did not respond to the implied threat but when they entered the forecastle, and the lieutenant tossed him a suit he said quietly, "I'm no Britisher."

"You will be soon."

"I shan't wear that suit!" the lad declared stoutly.

The lieutenant's response was a blow that felled Amos to the floor. There were two or three sailors in the place who, whatever their feelings may have been, looked stolidly at the prostrate lad and did not speak.

Almost beside himself with rage Amos leaped to his feet and sprang at his tormentor. The latter backed away and said grimly, "Do you want to be put in irons?"

"I don't care what you do! You stole me! You took me when you knew I was not a British boy. You may kill me if you want to, but you can't make me work for a press-gang! I'm glad my father and my brothers are fighting you! I wish I was with them! I'd—"

"That's enough," said the lieutenant abruptly.

"You're only a boy or I'd shoot you as I would a rabbit. Here, mates," he said turning to the silent sailors, "put the uniform on him."

The men stepped forward to obey and suddenly Amos's frantic efforts ceased. One of the men nodded his head assuringly and then even winked at the excited boy, or at least Amos fancied that he did. Passive in their hands Amos soon was clad in the uniform of a British sailor, the young officer looking on meanwhile in apparent good nature.

"Now, then, lad! You are clothed and I fancy you are in your right mind, as well. Don't ever refuse to obey orders again. I'm disposed to be a bit easy with you, but you will have to do your part like a man and the sooner you begin the better it will be for you and all of us."

Amos looked almost stupidly at the officer while he was speaking, and made no response when he ended.

"Will you let him bunk with you, Tom?" asked the lieutenant of one of the men.

"Aye, aye, sir. 'E can share my watch, too, if 'e like."

"I don't know about that. You'll have to fix that up with the others. I don't want the young Yankee left to himself very much."

"We'll keep a heye on him," responded Tom gravely.

"Very well," said the officer and at once departed.

"My heye," said the sailor, whom the lieutenant had called "Tom," when Amos was left with the two men. "You are a fierce lad t' stand up t' an hofficer. Did ye know he has th' right to shoot you?"

"Shoot me? What for?"

"Might come pretty close t' a mutiny, lad."

"I'm not a member of the crew of the *Duke of Gloucester*. I'm not a British subject. I'm a Yankee—"

"Leastwise you're now aboard th' *Duke of Gloucester*, I'm thinkin'."

"They made me come! I didn't enlist! They stole me! And there's nobody home with my mother or Prudy," Amos added with a choke in his voice.

"That may all be so. I'm not disputin' your word, lad, but ye're here now and not there and th' best thing for you is t' put up with hit."

"I'll never put up with it!" declared Amos passionately. "They stole me! They made me come aboard!"

"How ye goin' ashore, lad?" asked Tom not unkindly.

"I don't know. I'll go somehow! I won't stay here! I—"

"I'm thinkin'," broke in the sailor in a still more friendly manner, "that ye'll do no such thing. Did ye never hear o' what happens t' th' Jackies that desert?"

"I'm not deserting. I don't belong here, I—"

“D’ye think as those observations would count much wi’ the captain o’ th’ *Duke of Gloucester*? ”

“Why wouldn’t they?”

“ ’E wouldn’t know th’ meanin’ o’ them terms. A British is a British where ever th’ sun happens t’ shine on him. No, lad, th’ only thing ye can do is t’ stay right ’ere—”

“I won’t stay here!” broke in Amos chokingly. “It isn’t right! I don’t belong here!”

“There was a chap aboard not long ago that used t’ talk just like the way you’re talkin’ now. ’E didn’t get a chance t’ talk very much though.”

“Why not?”

“Why, it was this way— What between the cat an’ the hiron and th’ brig—”

“Did they whip him with th’ cat-o’-nine-tails?” asked Amos aghast.

“They did.”

“And he was a Yankee?”

“That’s w’at ’e said ’e were.”

“Wasn’t he?”

“I’m thinkin’ ’e lived ’ereabouts.”

“And they made him serve on the *Duke of Gloucester*?”

“That’s right, sir.”

“Where is he now?” asked Amos suddenly.

“Ye might ask th’ lieutenant but hif Hi was you Hi don’t think as ’ow Hi’d do hit,—leastwise just yet.”

## CHAPTER V

### ACROSS THE LAKE

AS Amos said no more the sailor also became silent. If the lad had not been so busied with his own thoughts he would have seen that the expression on the bronzed face of Tom was not devoid of sympathy, but the night was now creeping on and in the deepening twilight he did not understand. Later, Amos was to learn of the large-heartedness of the rough old sailor, whom all the crew called Tom.

Amos was convinced now that the wretched man whom he and Prudy had found in the old chestnut tree was the "Yankee" of whom Tom had spoken. The lad shuddered as he recalled the sailor's references to the "cat," and "irons," the "brig," and various other forms of punishment. And all for what? Because the man had refused to serve in the navy of any nation but his own. And Amos did not blame him, he declared hotly to himself. He was glad his country was fighting to protect its own men from the marauding press-gangs, which seized unprotected men and compelled them to serve on board of some British man-of-war. He had heard of instances where these brutal gangs had even entered homes

and, seizing the men of the family while they were seated at the table with those of their own kin, had carried them away, declaring that they were subjects of King George and must take their part in the defense of his possessions. Perhaps hardest of all—at least Amos considered such tales hardest to bear—were the reports of American vessels being stopped on the high seas and searched by some British war vessel on the pretext that its officers were looking for some of their own men. And usually they found them! At least they found those whom they claimed to be British subjects. “Once a Briton, always a Briton.” How Amos detested the word. It was almost as hard as was the detestable service into which the helpless men were forced, brutally seized on such occasions and borne away to a labor on the vessels of another nation on the flimsy pretext that they still were subjects of the British King and as such must do their part in protecting his kingdom.

Bah! “Once a Briton, always a Briton!” Amos in disgust and anger repeated the expression several times, each mention increasing his feeling of anger. And yet he was in the same predicament himself now, he thought savagely. He, too, had been seized and carried on board one of the enemy’s vessels. He was to be compelled to serve as one of the crew. When his hot feelings rebelled he thought grimly of the wretched-looking being who had found a hiding-place in the corner. If he had only known, thought

Amos. The marks of suffering on the man's face, his torn clothing, his filthy appearance all were now easy to understand.

At all events the man in some way had contrived to escape from his tormentors. If one was able to do that why not another? The thought was inspiring, and the troubled lad at once took heart and began to think seriously of his own future.

The *Duke of Gloucester* was headed now for the open lake,—though what her destination was to be he had no way of knowing. All that he thought of was that if one man could get away, then his own future was not entirely without hope.

As Amos thought longer of his own difficulties and prospects, he decided that he would not openly refuse to obey orders. "Irons," "the cat," "the Brig,"—all the various forms of punishment in case he did disobey orders, only made his escape less likely. He might require all his strength. Certainly the poor fellow whom he had left in the corner-crib had looked as if a less heroic treatment would have been no disadvantage to him—to say the least.

No. Amos decided he would not openly rebel. His best chance of escaping might be lost in this way and nothing be gained in its place. He would keep silence, do what he was ordered to do, watch his opportunity and when the right time came make a break for freedom.

The decision once made, the lad's heart became

lighter. The anxiety which he knew his mother would suffer over his unexplained absence was almost as hard for him to bear as it was for her. It was one of the cruel experiences of war and as such must be borne. And as he had listened to Tom's stories of what had befallen the other victim of the press-gang—for Amos insisted to himself that he had been "pressed" instead of having been made a prisoner—he was glad that his country at last had taken up the defense of its own people. Better not have a country at all, he said, than to have one that is too cowardly or petty to make the value of its citizenship recognized everywhere. The past years had been hard, he well knew that. Most of the men in the region had entered the service—some on land, and some to fight in the fleets of Commodore Chauncey. It was worth all it cost! He too would do his small share as soon as he regained his freedom. His mother no longer would oppose such action when she heard his story.

Up to this time Mrs. Proper had induced his father not to take the lad with him into the service, though Amos had begged to go every time his father or brothers returned home for a brief furlough. Somebody must look after the place and defend her and Prudy. Such was the mother's ingenious way of trying to make her husband feel that her youngest boy was the defender of the home.

It was different now, Amos assured himself, and he would not have any difficulty in securing his moth-

er's consent for him to enter the service after she once understood that he too had been a victim of the dastardly press-gang.

Somewhat reassured by his reflections, Amos quickly heeded Tom's hail and at his bidding shared in the "grub" of the crew. His presence among the men apparently did not arouse much comment, for which the lad was thankful.

Later, when Tom told him that he was to share his watch, Amos was still more comforted, for the rough sailor had not been unkind, while the very fact that the lad had already had some conversation with him helped him to feel that he was not altogether among strangers.

On deck, Amos saw that the stars had appeared in the sky, but although he looked carefully all about the horizon not a trace of land could he discover. The *Duke of Gloucester* was in the open lake. The presence of peril was not feared hereabout and yet Amos was deeply impressed by the discipline on board. A crew of twenty-six, including the officers, was carried, and the handling of the long, slender sloop was admirable. To Amos's eyes all was not only new and strange, but also deeply impressive and when at last he "turned in" he was feeling somewhat depressed. What would the Yankees be able to accomplish against such training and equipment?

Vague reports of several victories won by the fighting vessels of the United States over their enemies on

the high seas had been brought home by Amos's father or brothers. The entire country was singing the praises of these bold sailor lads. That was all very well, thought Amos, but it was vastly different from the conditions on the Great Lakes. There the crews were hardy and eager, but without experience. The vessels on which they sailed had been hastily built and some of them of timber that was green. Indeed, in some cases only a few weeks elapsed in the transformation of giant forest trees into the planks that covered the decks of gunboats.

Then, too, many of the British seamen were men of experience. They had been sailors since boyhood, having served in some of the fishing fleets before they had been transferred to the navy. They were at home on the ocean or lake. It was true that some in each crew had come from the sparsely settled regions of Canada, but it was equally true that most of the leaders and many of the sailors had been brought across the sea.

With the coming of the morning there was also a return of courage to Amos's heart. The clear air, the sunshine, warmer than it had been for many weeks, even the excitement of his new surroundings, all helped to restore a feeling of confidence. The lad was more clearly enabled to see now how useless his struggle against his captors would be. He must agree not to disagree, and then, ever watchful of his opportunities, seize the first that should present itself.

As the *Duke of Gloucester* had long been out of sight of land Amos was convinced that she was headed for the Canadian shore. Just where she would land, he did not know, nor did Tom, when he asked the old sailor for his opinion.

"She's headed nor'-nor'west," said Tom.

"What's that mean?" asked Amos when he was standing beside the old sailor near the forward rail.

"York lies beyon'."

"Ever been there?"

"Hi 'ave."

"Do you think we'll stay there long?"

"Look 'ere, lad," responded Tom gruffly, "do 'e know what 'appened t' th' man what asked too many questions?"

"But I want to know," asserted Amos.

"Well, 'e might ask th' captain."

"He wouldn't tell me."

"Hi 'ave doubts m'self," said Tom grinning as he spoke.

"I guess I'll have to wait."

"That is more'n likely."

And Amos waited. The *Duke of Gloucester's* action was marvelous in the eyes of the lad who never before had been on board such a craft. When the War of 1812 was declared, the Americans had only one or two vessels on the lake that could by any stretch of the imagination be classified as war-ships.

The British, however, had a half dozen. Since the

outbreak of hostilities Commodore Chauncey, in command of the American "fleet," and Commodore Yeo, his British opponent, had both been bending all their energies toward the construction of new vessels.

A fair degree of success had attended their efforts and, in 1813, Commodore Chauncey's fleet was composed of the following,—the flagship *Madison*, the *Oneida*, the *Fair American*, the *Hamilton*, the *General Tompkins*, the *Asp*, the *Pert*, the *Growler*, the *Ontario*, the *Scourge*, and the *Lady of the Lake*, a total of eleven vessels, besides the transport the *Raven*. The commodore's headquarters were at Sackett's Harbor, the eastern extremity of Lake Ontario, where General Dearborn with a part of the Army of the North also was stationed, at that time.

Not far away, just where the great lake empties its waters into the majestic St. Lawrence, was Kingston, in the direct route to Montreal and Quebec. At York (now Toronto) and in the region of Niagara the British also had forts and at the time when this story begins it was confidently believed by all that as far as the North was concerned the second year of the war would see its greatest activities along the Niagara borders.

Amos Proper, living as he had, in his secluded home, had not had many opportunities for securing information concerning the plans or operations of the army, his chief source of information being the rare visits of his father or brothers. As a conse-

quence, if he had been told of the stirring events which were soon to be enacted and in which he was to share, the statement would have been almost incredible.

Early the following morning the shore of Canada was sighted. Amos was standing beside Tom near the rail and as the distant outline of the coast became more distinct, the lad turned to the sailor and asked, "Do you know now where we're bound for?"

"Looks like it is York, lad."

"What is there?"

"Some blockhouses, a fort, a few men and—the British lion."

"Have you ever been there before?"

"Aye, lad."

"Is it much of a town?"

"Not yet."

"What do you mean by 'not yet'?"

"It's goin' to be a big town, some day, though I'm thinkin' neither o' us will ever live long enough t' see it. But—"

"We're going into a bay of some sort," interrupted Amos.

"Aye. It's a bay of some sort. The blockhouses are halong the shore, an hup beyon' is the fort, an' the soldier boys."

"How many men are stationed here?"

"Sometimes seven or eight 'undred."

"Are that many here now?"

"You sure know has much 'bout that has Hi do."

"Why? Are we to stay here?"

"Stop yer talkin'. There'll be time enough t' find out some things, hanyway."

The swift sloop glided over the waters of the harbor and Amos, who was not busy at the time, noticed the beds of weeds that were growing far out from the shore. He gazed curiously at the rude blockhouses, several of which he could see as the *Duke of Gloucester* skimmed the shore of the bay. He saw scarlet clad soldiers too, and the sight was so interesting that for a moment he forgot his own troubles as he watched the exciting scenes by which they were passing.

At last the sloop came to anchor, Amos having done his part in taking in the sail. Of course, he was ignorant of the plans of the commander and did not know whether or not he was to be kept on board or sent ashore.

His suspense was relieved when an hour later Tom came to him and said, "The hensign would like a word with you haft."

Amos at once went to the quarters indicated and there found the young sailor who had been the leader of the little band that had visited his home in their pursuit of the missing man who was hidden in the cornerib.

"How is it, lad?" said the ensign as Amos drew near.

"How is what?"

"I wonder if a Yankee ever answered a question except by asking another," said the sailor good-naturedly. "What I mean, my dear sir, is this: do your quarters on board the H. M. S. *Duke of Gloucester* suit you?"

"I'm not going to stay here," replied Amos quickly.

"Oh, tarry here," said the ensign mockingly.

"I sha'n't."

"Well, before you take your final departure I want you to answer two or three questions." The young sailor waited a moment for Amos to indicate his willingness but as the lad remained silent, he continued:

"Was that man we wanted really at your home?"

"He was."

"While we were there?"

"You were within two feet of him."

"When?"

"When you were looking for him."

"Look here, young man, did you hide him?"

"I helped."

"Why, may I inquire?"

"I'd help any man to get away from your press-gangs."

"Why don't you help yourself?"

"I'm going to."

The young ensign stared at the boy in silence a moment and then laughed loudly. "You are the cock of the walk, I see. Wait till you get a taste of

the cat. It will make you as gentle as Simeon Jones was."

"Who is Simeon Jones?"

"He's the man you helped. Look here, my lad, did you have anything to do with the two men who were missing?"

"I locked them both in the cellar."

"You did?"

"Yes, sir, I did," declared Amos boldly.

"You would be wise not to let the captain hear of that."

"I sha'n't tell him if you don't."

"My eye, but you are a quaint brat, I perceive. Tell me one thing more—is your sister—"

"Which sister?" broke in Amos.

"The one I saw. Are there any more?"

"Yes, sir. I have other sisters."

"Married?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is this girl's name?"

"Prudence—we call her Prudy for short."

"She isn't married, is she?"

"No."

"She is a fine lass—much too good to be a Yankee."

"That's what makes her worth anything!"

"Never mind that. I am going ashore and may be at the fort two or three days. As a special favor the captain says I may take you with me."

“Where’s the sloop going to be?”

“She is going on to—she’ll be back in a few days,” the young sailor hastily corrected himself.

Amos was silent a moment before he said simply, “I’ll take my chances and go with you.”

“I’m sure I appreciate your kindness,” laughed the ensign good-naturedly.

In a brief time Amos and Tom were rowed ashore, neither of them suspecting that they were entering upon the most thrilling experiences of their lives.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DESCENT

“NOR'EASTER brewin', I'm thinkin',” said Tom as he and Amos stepped ashore.

“Looks like it.”

“Keep us 'ere a spell.”

“Yes,” responded Amos absently. He was looking about him with interest, and, without attracting the attention of his companion, was trying to think of some scheme by which he might escape from the region. To get away from York might not be difficult but to cross the lake was another and more difficult problem. Already he had found Tom's advice good to follow. The sufferings of the man whom they had called Simeon Jones had been heroic, but somehow Amos was convinced that the better plan for him to follow was not to rebel but to be watchful of his opportunity and when it came seize it quickly. “Where are we going now?” he asked as he looked up at his companion.

“Bless me! Th' lad is hall han hinterruption p'int.”

“I'm a *what?*”

"A hinterruption p'int. Don't 'e know what that is?"

"No."

"Well, 'e will find hout. All th' time 'e wants t' know where 'e's going."

"I do want t' know. Wouldn't you?"

"Who? Me? No, lad. Hi take hit as hit come. What for should Hi be worritin' hover somethink Hi can't change?"

"I don't know," replied Amos more thoughtfully.

Conversation ceased when they drew near the fort. The redcoats were on every side and Amos was quite impressed by their appearance though Tom professed to have little respect for the "lubbers," who couldn't tell the difference betwixt a "belayin' pin an' a spinaker."

It was night when the two sailors returned to the *Duke of Gloucester*, and Amos's thoughts were more busied than before with his plans of getting away. He had noticed the yawl in which he had first been carried to the sloop, but it had been taken in tow and the watch would be quick to discover any attempt to slip away in it.

Another project had been to do his work quietly and faithfully on board and remain with the crew until the sloop should go to the Niagara region, as he believed from what Tom had hinted it would do in the near future. Once there, it might be possible

for him some dark night to swim ashore after he had dropped from the side of the gunboat.

Still another dimly formed plan was to hide in the vicinity of York until after the departure of the *Duke of Gloucester*. It was true the region was almost a wilderness but the boy was confident that somehow he could find food enough to sustain him until he might be able to find some craft in which he would put to sea. That his schemes were wild and visionary, the lad as yet had no conception.

The waters of the lake were even more boisterous when night fell than they had been in the daytime and Tom's "nor'easter" was certainly at hand. To Amos the approaching of a storm meant little, for he did not join it in his thoughts with the predicament in which he now found himself.

Early the following morning Amos was awakened by sounds he never before had heard. Not only were men shouting and running about, on the deck of the *Duke of Gloucester*, but he was convinced that there were shouts and calls not far away and that great guns were also speaking.

Not positive whether the sounds were those of friends or foes the excited boy hastily donned his uniform and rushed up on deck. The sloop was rolling in the trough of a heavy sea and pulling hard upon her anchor. As Amos appeared he was almost thrown to the deck by the tremendous report of one of the guns of the sloop.

Intensely excited the boy scrambled to his feet, held on to the rail and looked toward the lake. He was scarcely able to credit the sight which he beheld. Along the entrance to the harbor he saw a fleet! He counted until he made out eleven vessels. And he could easily discern the flag from the masthead of the flagship. The fleet belonged to his own country! The Yankee men-of-war had come!

Thrilled by the sight and thought Amos was ready to shout when he thought that the *Duke of Gloucester* was the only hostile vessel in the vicinity. His relief was at hand and soon he would be again in his old home!

The *Duke of Gloucester* was manned by a crew that had the true British spirit and were not willing to surrender without an attempt to defend themselves. But the odds were so heavily against the gunboat that resistance was worse than useless. She might fire her guns, but hemmed in as she was the defense would mean only a wanton destruction of life.

Besides, the confident Britons doubtless believed that the approaching fleet of Yankees would not be able to take the fortress at York and in the event of their defeat it would be better to preserve the *Duke of Gloucester* for their own future needs on Lake Ontario.

Amazed as Amos was by the stirring sight, he was ready to join in the shouting when the sloop was surrendered and a force of Yankees was sent on board

to hold the vessel and prevent the crew from escaping. With others he was shut in the forecastle and compelled to await the issue of the coming contest. The men all were sullen and silent and Amos quickly decided that his own feelings must be concealed. But it was difficult not to show his elation over the coming of his friends.

His thoughts speedily were affected by the reports of the guns which would be followed by shouts that sounded more or less distant as the wind bore them to the ears of the prisoners. Silence would follow the loud reports and then again the cheers would proceed a volley.

Amos could not know that young General Zebulon Pike had been placed in command of the seventeen hundred Yankee soldiers whom Commodore Chauncey's fleet had just transported from Sackett's Harbor. General Dearborn who was in command of this army had been taken ill and young Pike had been selected to take his place.

Nor could the lad see that after the attack and the fall of the first blockhouse the Americans, with cheers and calls and shouts, were pushing up the shore toward the second. This, too, fell after a sharp struggle and as its defenders withdrew toward the fort their enemies were in close pursuit.

Suddenly the air was rent by a report that was almost deafening. The very sides of the *Duke of Gloucester* seemed to Amos to be falling apart after

the vessel had been lifted to an incredible height. He saw his companions stare at one another in terror. Some of the men were whimpering like frightened children.

"What is it, Tom?" one of the sailors tremblingly inquired.

"The fort is blown hup, I'm thinkin'."

"No," suggested another boldly.

"Y' might be givin' hus your 'pinion," suggested Tom glaring at the man as he spoke.

"It's the magazine."

"I'm thinkin' y're correct," admitted Tom nodding his head thoughtfully.

"Some o' th' Yankees won't stop this side o' Land's End."

"'Twill be lucky hif some o' hour poor chaps don't join 'em on th' way."

"What's that?" demanded another sailor somewhat nervously as a strange sound was faintly borne into the forecastle.

"Singin'," declared Tom gruffly after a brief silence.

"Who's singin'?"

"Th' Yanks."

"Then they aren't all dead."

"They don't know henough t' know when they hare dead," growled Tom.

"What's that they're singin'?" asked the first speaker turning to Amos.

"Yankee Doodle," replied Amos enthusiastically.

"Y' look has hif y' liked it," said Tom sourly.

"I do," responded Amos promptly.

"Not 'ere?"

"Anywhere. It shows they aren't all killed anyway. There they go! Just listen to that, will you?" added the excited boy as the sound of cheering—"three times three"—was heard.

"They'll never stand up afore th' reg'lars," said Tom eagerly, shaking his head.

"They aren't down yet or they wouldn't be cheering," said Amos positively.

"Wait till th' reg'lars charge 'em," was Tom's statement. "I'm thinkin' when General Sheaffe starts out o' th' fort 'e won't find many Yankees to chase."

Amos became silent, and the "waiting" to which Tom had referred followed. To the eager boy it seemed almost as if the hours must have heavy weights attached to them, the time dragged so slowly. The noise of the storm was all that could be heard for even his companions soon ceased talking. The very air became heavy and oppressive. Not a word was brought concerning the result of the attack on York.

The long day at last drew to a close. Just before sunset the prisoners were summoned and as each passed up to the deck a second search of his person was made to prove that he had no concealed weapons about him.

When the crew were all on deck they were arranged

in two rows, Amos taking his place in the line, although he was eager to explain who he was and obtain his freedom.

In bands of six the sailors were next taken ashore, the Yankee crew that had taken possession of the sloop watching each departing yawl as well as the men remaining on deck. On the shore other Yankee sailors were to be seen, to whom the bands of prisoners were committed.

Amos was able to form only one conclusion and that was that the British had been defeated in the attack on York and that the *Duke of Gloucester* was now in possession of the Americans.

The thought was inspiring and as his turn came to go ashore Amos said hastily to the young American officer standing by the side, "I'm a Yankee."

"Good for you," said the boyish officer but without glancing at the one who had spoken.

"Do I have to go ashore?"

"Ashore you go!" responded the sailor giving Amos a push as he spoke. "Be lively! We don't want to stay here all night."

"But I'm an American," protested the lad.

"Tell that to the marines. Get aboard the yawl, or there'll be one less Yankee among the Jackies."

Indignant as Amos was that his claim had been ignored, he was aware that it would be impossible for him to explain more fully at such a place and time, so he obediently took his seat in the rolling yawl

and in a brief time he, with his companions, was landed on the shore.

Speedily the six men were formed in line and then were led by the Americans to a place farther up the bay. There they were embarked in another yawl and taken swiftly toward one of the fleet at anchor not far away.

In the same boat with Amos were Tom, the old sailor, and the young ensign who had led the band to his house in the search for the missing Simeon Jones. The face of the ensign showed how deep was his depression. There were moments when he appeared to be utterly hopeless. With Tom, however, the affair was taken in his usual philosophical way and there was slight difference in the expression of his face.

“Seems like y’r hown folks don’t want y’ now that ye’ve put on a British uniform,” he whispered to Amos when they were seated side by side. “Hit’s worse nor poison, lad.”

“I’ll get a chance to explain it to somebody.”

“Silence in the boat,” sternly called out the man in command.

Both Tom and Amos ceased talking and with different emotions watched the vessel which they soon approached. Amos saw her name—the *Fair American*—on her bow. The waters were so rough and the sloop’s deck so high that ladders were lowered. Up these the British sailors climbed like monkeys and

as soon as they were on the deck they were led to the forecastle, where they were shut in.

“Hi can’t see very much difference, lad, between this sloop an’ the’ *Duke o’ Gloucester*. I’m thinkin’ I’d better take a nap.” To Amos’s amazement the hardy old sailor crept into a hammock and instantly fell asleep.

The crew of the *Duke of Gloucester* had been taken in small divisions to different ships of the American fleet, perhaps as a precaution against the danger of an uprising. At all events, it was not long before the Yankee sailors were on their way back to Sackett’s Harbor, after having destroyed the fort at York and had taken such supplies as the British army had not ruined.

In a general way Amos was aware of a victory, but just how great it was or what the losses had been he had no way of knowing. He was eager to talk to some one of the officers of the *Fair American*, and explain how it was that he wore a British uniform and was counted among the prisoners taken in what the Yankees called the “Descent on York.” Satisfied that his opportunity would soon come, the lad made no effort to explain his position that night, trusting to the coming day to make all things clear.

The following morning, however, was a disappointment to the troubled boy. When the inspection of the prisoners was made by the captain, Amos in his heart eagerly hailed the coming of the man.

As each prisoner stepped forward at the bidding of the officer to declare his name, age, position and various other matters, Amos watched his companions, each eagerly waiting for his own turn.

At last the captain, scarcely glancing at the lad as he spoke, said, "What is your name?"

"Amos Proper."

"Your home?"

"On the shore of Lake Ontario."

"Your nationality?"

"American."

"What?" said the officer glancing hastily up from his notebook as he heard the somewhat startling statement.

"That is what I am," said Amos somewhat confidently. "I belong in the United States."

"What are you doing in the crew of the *Duke of Gloucester*?" demanded the captain sternly.

"I was 'pressed'; the press-gang took me."

The captain smiled incredulously, as he said, "How old are you?"

"Fifteen—going on sixteen."

"I guess you're telling the truth now. But even the press-gang doesn't take boys no older than you."

"They took me," asserted Amos, his confidence still strong.

"When?"

"Two days ago."

"Where?"

“At my father’s house.”

“Where was your father? Why didn’t he—”

“My father and my two brothers and my two brothers-in-law are in the army or navy. They were all away from home.”

“Which army?”

“American—of course.”

“Don’t be disrespectful,” said the captain, his cheeks flushing slightly at Amos’s unconscious retort and the unconcealed delight of the prisoners who were listening to the conversation. “I’ll look up your story after a while,” said the captain as he prepared to depart.

“But,” protested Amos in his disappointment, “these men will tell you that what I am saying is true!” as he looked behind him at the prisoners from the *Duke of Gloucester*. “That man—the ensign,” he explained, pointing to the young sailor as he spoke, “was the leader; he had five men from the *Duke of Gloucester* and they came to our house looking for one of—one of our men they had pressed—and he had left.”

“Did they find him?” asked the captain with a smile.

“No, sir, I had hidden him in the corner.”

“So they took you in his place, did they?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Did they take any of your younger brothers?”

“I haven’t any younger brothers.”

“Oh, well, if you had had, doubtless they would have taken them too. The press-gangs want the infants.”

The captain having completed his record was about to depart.

In amazement and anger Amos looked blankly at him. “Are you going to keep me here?” he demanded.

“Certainly.”

“But I’m not a redcoat! I’m an American! I belong to—”

“You might appeal to Admiral Chauncey,” laughed the captain. “I’m too old a bird to be caught by any such chaff.”

Without another word the officer was gone, followed by a loud laugh from Amos’s companions.

## CHAPTER VII

### WHICH IS AMOS?

THE returning fleet of the victorious Americans encountered heavy storms and head winds, and consequently throughout the voyage there was almost no opportunity for Amos Proper to hold any conversation with any of his captors. In a general way the result of the expedition was known among the prisoners and the fall of young General Pike also was reported. Except to the Americans, however, the names of the youthful leaders meant little and "Pike's Peak," named for the daring young explorer, was in a region that was vague as well as far distant. Amos's feelings were somewhat soothed by Tom who partly persuaded the impatient young prisoner that he would have little difficulty in making himself known when the fleet had gained its harbor.

"But I don't know anybody there," protested Amos though he was eager to be convinced.

"'E soon will. Don't 'e do any more worritin'."

"How will I know anybody? They may shut me up with the rest of you and not believe a word I say."

"Don't 'e worry," Tom answered almost monotonously.

But Amos was anxious, even if he was not "worrit-in'." Throughout the voyage he was continually trying to conjure up some way by which he might appeal to Commodore Chauncey or gain the ear of General Dearborn.

At last the returning fleet was safely within the sheltering arms of Sackett's Harbor. The region was as new to Amos as it was to his fellow prisoners and with keen interest the lad looked over the blue waters and up at the rude barracks on the high and bold shore. The harbor itself was almost ideal. The long arms of the shore ran far out into the lake, the coast was rocky and high and even the islands within the harbor all seemed to be a part of the natural defense.

It was late in the afternoon when the fleet arrived and only a few of the prisoners were taken ashore. The following morning, however, Amos and his recent companions on the *Duke of Gloucester* were summoned to the deck, and then under guard ordered ashore and preparations at once made to march them to the guardhouse.

All the time Amos was looking keenly about him hoping to discover some familiar face but not one was to be seen in the curious crowd that assembled at the rude docks. Under guard, the prisoners in small detachments were marched toward the barracks. Once or twice Amos had attempted to explain or declare who he was and to ask for release, but each time he had been rudely and sharply rebuffed. Tom, who

was marching beside him, shook his head protestingly and at last Amos concluded that the old sailor was correct and that he must possess his soul in patience until the proper time to speak should be found.

The prisoners soon arrived on the little plateau where the stone barracks had been erected. As a halt was called, Amos looked over the water of Lake Ontario, now sparkling in the light of the closing day. Far away was his home! Here he was a prisoner held by the army and the navy in which his own father and brothers were serving! It was all a huge mistake. He was entitled to more consideration, the angry lad kept saying to himself. At last when darkness drew near and he sought a place where he might sleep on the floor of the room in which he and his companions were confined, Amos was quite convinced that his country was grossly indifferent to his predicament and wanting in a proper care of its patriotic boys.

With the coming of daylight, however, the lad's spirits in a measure revived. The day was ideal, and the yellow sunlight was filled with suggestiveness of the work that ought to be done at home. And yet just how to proceed to secure his freedom was not entirely clear to Amos.

Soon after the prisoners had been fed they were conducted from the building in which they had been confined. As they were led across the grounds, Amos, who was keenly alert to all that was passing, suddenly

stopped as he beheld in a small group of soldiers standing near and closely watching "the British tars,"—his own brother Hiram. Unmindful of his position, the boy shouted, "Hiram! Hi! Come and get me."

A blow on the side of his head, inflicted by the guard at this unexpected breach of discipline, was disregarded. Clapping his hand upon his throbbing ear, Amos ignored the attack and the man alike, as he excitedly watched his brother.

Startled by the call, Hiram Proper ran closer to the passing squad and gazed eagerly into the faces of the men. In a moment he spied Amos and was as startled as his younger brother had been when he had discovered his own brother among the spectators.

"Amos, is that really you?" he called.

"That's my name," shouted Amos. "Get me out of this, will you?"

The perplexed guard looking first at Hiram, who was clad in the uniform of a soldier of the United States, and then at Amos, who was wearing the suit which had been provided for him on the *Duke of Gloucester*, did not know what to do or say. The prisoners, all interested, had almost come to a halt as they looked at the three men.

"You've made a mistake," called Hiram. "You've got my brother there."

"These men are British prisoners," retorted the guard somewhat tartly, though it was manifest that he had been impressed by the words.



"HIRAM! HI! COME AND GET ME."—Page 94.



“Can’t help that. That boy is Amos Proper—as good a Yankee as you are.”

“He was brought from York—”

“No, he wasn’t,” asserted Hiram positively. “He lives—”

“Yes, I was, Hi. I just came from York,” broke in Amos.

“You did?” exclaimed Hiram. “I don’t—you can’t—what do you mean?”

“Yes, I came from York; but Tom, here,” Amos added as he turned to the sailor beside him, “knows how it all was. He’ll tell you, I—”

“Come along and tell your tale to Captain Brown,” broke in the guard. “I can’t make head nor tail of it.”

“Come on, Hi!” called Amos gleefully. “We’ll get it fixed up now.”

The discipline at Sackett’s Harbor was severe in some ways and lax in others. Many of the men enrolled there had enlisted only for a term of three months or were serving as minute-men. Many of them, too, were neighbors and friends and knowing one another by their first names were perhaps not duly impressed by the dignity assumed by some of the officers.

At all events the guard that was conducting the band of six prisoners across the parade ground was among those to whom many of the duties, to say nothing of the technical terms to be employed in their

new positions, were all unknown. He understood that he was to see that the half dozen men consigned to him did not escape while he was in charge of the band. Perhaps beyond that he did not know what was expected of him.

When the little force arrived at the destination, Captain Brown was among the men awaiting its arrival.

Roughly touching his cap, the guard said awkwardly, "Beggin' pardon, sir, but this man," pointing to Hiram, as he spoke, "claims we've made a mistake."

"What's the mistake?" demanded the officer gruffly of the young soldier as he spoke.

"Only that you've got the wrong man in there," explained Hiram indicating Amos as the one to whom he was referring.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, except that he isn't a redcoat, or a British tar."

"What do you know about it?"

"I know all about it."

"Say it then, man! I can't keep these men out here any longer. They'll all be claiming they are Yankees pretty quick."

"That boy is my brother."

"What of it?"

"He's a Yankee."

"What was he doing in York?"

"I don't know. He'll have to tell you—"

"I guess you don't know," laughed the officer.

"We can't stay here all day! Forward—"

"Wait a minute," interrupted Hiram quietly. "I know what I'm talking about. My father, my older brother, my two brothers-in-law and I are all in the service of our country. I guess we're entitled to be heard. Now I tell you that boy is my younger brother and a better Yankee than you are to-day! You let him go!"

"I can't let him go. He'll have to—"

"Take him to the general, then."

"No. I can't do that either. You can report if you want to and if what you say is true—"

"It is true," broke in Hiram.

"I'm not saying it isn't," said the officer not unkindly as he saw how excited the young soldier was. "All I say is that I haven't any right to let him go, and I sha'n't let him go, either. You go on and explain matters at headquarters and I guess you won't have any trouble in getting the youngster out, though for the life of me I can't see what he was doing in York."

"Go on, Amos," called Hiram, "I'll fix that all up for you."

As the band resumed its march, Hiram Proper ran swiftly in the direction of the officers' quarters and soon disappeared from Amos's sight, for the lad obediently followed the command of the guard and with

his companions marched towards the old stone guard-house, where already two score or more of the prisoners taken at York were confined.

Only a short distance had been covered, however, before a halt was ordered, and a sergeant stepped out and called loudly, "Is Amos Proper here?"

"Yes, sir, I'm here! I'm Amos Proper."

"So am I," declared a young sailor promptly advancing at the same time.

"You can't both be Amos Propers," said the sergeant as he looked at both claimants.

"Of course, we can't," said the strange Amos. "I'm the one. I don't know who this fellow is," he added as he turned to the other Amos.

"Who are you?" demanded the guard.

"I am Amos Proper."

"No, he isn't. I am," declared the other.

"How can I tell which one is telling the truth?" asked the sergeant helplessly.

"Take me, I'll soon show you," said the first claimant to the name.

"And you say you are Amos Proper, too, do you?" asked the sergeant of Amos.

"I know I am."

"Can you prove it?"

"I can."

"How?"

"My brother will tell you."

"Where is your brother?"

"I don't just happen to know where he is now," answered Amos in confusion.

"Of course, he doesn't 'happen' to know just where his brother is now," jeeringly said the rival. "He doesn't know where he is. But I can tell him."

"Where is he?"

"I don't like to tell."

"Why not?"

"Because he's where—where—this fellow will go when he—"

A loud laugh interrupted the speaker and even Amos, who as yet had not taken seriously the claim that had been made, joined in the laughter. He was confident now that a speedy release was at hand.

"My brother is here in Sackett's Harbor," declared Amos.

"That's just what I said," spoke up his rival, whereat there was another laugh.

"Where in Sackett's is he?" asked the guard.

"He is here somewhere though I can't say just where."

"Would you like to look him up?"

"Yes, sir."

"So would I," joined in the other claimant of the name. "I'll tell you," he added, "you take me first and if I can't prove that I'm the one you want then I'll come back without a word."

"I'll do it," said the sergeant promptly.

"But *I* am Amos Proper," broke in the true Amos in dismay.

"Look 'e 'ere," suggested Tom quietly, "don't 'e see—"

"Yes, I see," fairly shouted Amos. "There comes my brother now! Hiram! Hi! Hi! Come here! Be quick!"

The eyes of every one in the band were turned quickly toward Hiram Proper who in the company of an officer was seen approaching the place where the band of prisoners had halted.

Ignoring the words of the excited lad, the officer turned to Hiram as he drew near and said, "Just answer my questions if you please, and do not volunteer any information at this time unless I ask for it. Is your brother here?"

"Yes, sir," replied Hiram.

"More than one brother here?"

"No, sir."

"What is your brother's name?"

"Amos Proper."

"What is your name?"

"Hiram Proper."

"You have served in our army?"

"Yes, sir, and in the navy, too. I have—"

"Just answer my questions. Where have you served?"

"At Niagara."

"What are you doing at Sackett's Harbor?"

"I am not in the service here."

"That is not what I asked," retorted the officer angrily.

"I am answering your question," said Hiram stolidly. "That is what you told me to do,—and nothing more." The men grinned at one another and the anger of the officer who was somewhat bumptious in his manner increased.

"You need be careful," continued the officer. "I'll order you to the guardhouse."

"For what?" Again the delight of the listeners became apparent.

"For disrespect."

"I haven't any disrespect."

"Then answer my question, and don't put on any airs."

"Yes, sir."

"Is your brother here?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are you doing here?"

"Answering your questions," replied Hiram simply.

Again the delight of the waiting men became manifest and this time more audibly with the result of increasing the rage of the pompous young lieutenant.

"Why are you here?"

"You'll have to ask General Dearborn that question."

"I'm asking you."

"Yes, sir."

"Why are you here?"

"I can't answer that question—for you."

"You must answer me."

Hiram shook his head and remained silent.

"Are you going to tell me?" shouted the irate officer.

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"I have told you why."

"And you openly disobey me?"

"No, sir. I do not mean to disobey you. But there are reasons why I cannot tell you. Others know and if you ask them they may tell you, but I cannot do it."

"I'll send you to the guardhouse!"

"Yes, sir."

"And you still refuse to tell me who you are?"

"No, sir."

"But you have! You have openly defied me! You have—"

"I am Hiram Proper," broke in the young soldier quietly. "That is the answer to your question, sir."

"If you belong in Niagara why are you here?"

"I told you that you must ask those who know—and are willing to tell you. I cannot."

"Sergeant, take this man to the guardhouse!" roared the young officer.

"You'd better speak to General Dearborn first," suggested Hiram quietly.

"I'll speak to nobody! You have disobeyed my orders and you must take the consequences. Sergeant, take him—No. I'll free Amos Proper first. Step out of line, young man," commanded the officer. "Now then," he added brutally as Amos and the man who also claimed his name obediently advanced two steps, "I guess I know which is the right man to let go. I've had word to let Amos Proper go free. You say you are the man?" inquired the officer as he looked sharply at Amos's companion.

"I do," replied the prisoner promptly.

"Then you are to report at headquarters. You get back into the line!" the young lieutenant commanded Amos.

"But I am Amos Proper," protested the lad. "I am—"

"Silence in the ranks!" roared the leader. "Forward march!" he added; and with Hiram also in the charge of the sergeant, the little band resumed its advance.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RELEASE

AS Amos marched with the men up the hill his heart was heavy. Perplexed by the action of his brother, Hiram, who was smiling and apparently indifferent, he could not understand his attitude toward the condition in which they both found themselves. There was, however, no opportunity for conversation and not a word had been spoken when at last their destination was gained.

When they arrived at the guardhouse, the young lieutenant in charge of the prisoners held a brief conference with the officer in command, leaving his band in charge of the sergeant. To Amos's surprise, Hiram at once left the lines and boldly advanced to the place where the two officers were standing. The action of his brother was even more puzzling to the young prisoner than his air of indifference had been. He was deeply interested, however, in what was occurring and intently watched the two men who at first turned harshly upon Hiram, but in a moment were conversing eagerly with him. The conversation continued for several minutes but at last the lieutenant turned once

more to his prisoners and ordered all except Amos to be taken within the building.

There still was no opportunity for Amos to ask his brother what all these things meant. However, it became manifest at once that under the care of the sergeant both Amos and Hiram were to be led away, and that they were not to enter the guardhouse. This thought was uppermost in Amos's mind, and, even in his perplexity, his feeling of elation was strong. Not a word was spoken until the three men arrived at the rude stone house where, after a brief halt and in response to the word which the sergeant had with the guard, the three were bidden to enter.

Turning sharply to Amos, Hiram whispered, "You stay outside."

"What for?" inquired the boy.

"I cannot explain now, but you do as I tell you."

"But I don't want you to leave me. I don't want to stay out here alone."

With a smile Hiram turned away and did not reply to the unspoken questions of his excited younger companion.

A quarter hour or more elapsed before Hiram came down the stone steps and rejoined his brother. "It is all right, Amos," he said quietly.

"What is all right?" asked Amos quickly.

"Why, you're free."

"I am!" exclaimed the startled boy. "How do I know I am?"

Hiram laughed, as he replied, "I have a letter in my pocket which will answer any questions which any of the guards may want to ask."

"Who wrote the letter?"

"General Dearborn."

"What?"

"That's right."

"Did he give you a letter?"

"I told you he did."

"Why did he give it to you?"

"You might ask him," laughed Hiram, "though I am afraid you might have a little difficulty in being admitted into his presence."

"How did you get in?"

"Oh, he was waiting for me."

"Go ahead, Hi,—tell me about it. Are you sure? Suppose somebody stops me?"

"You won't have any trouble," replied Hiram, "if you stay with me, but I don't intend to be in Sackett's Harbor very long."

"Why not?"

"Because I am going home."

"Going home! How can you leave?"

"My time is up May 1st. I enlisted for six months, you know."

"And you are going home now?" asked Amos again, his face showing the keen excitement he felt.

"I am. There is some planting that will have to be done, and I guess it is about time for Sally to

see her soldier boy again. I haven't been home since Christmas."

"Are you going to stay at home?" inquired Amos.

"That all depends on what happens this spring. I shall get the crops in the ground, look after the stock, fix up the house and do what may be needed about the place. If our boys drive the redcoats back, why, I sha'n't leave home again; but if they give us more trouble, I may have to go and take my part."

"Where did you come from now?" inquired Amos as he and his brother walked slowly back toward the shore.

"Two or three places."

"Tell me," demanded Amos, rebelling at the teasing manner of his brother.

"Well, I came first from Niagara."

"Then straight to Sackett's Harbor?"

"Not exactly."

"Tell me about it," again demanded the younger brother.

"Amos," responded Hiram in mock seriousness, his eyes shining in the pleasure he had, both in the company of the lad and at the prospect of a speedy return to his home, "you must learn to control yourself. I am afraid you would not make much of a soldier, if you don't learn that children must be seen and not heard."

"If these soldiers weren't here," retorted Amos,

"I'd show you that I could put you on your back!"

"That sounds exceedingly well, but I am afraid you are better at promising than you are at performing."

"Tell me where you came from," again pleaded Amos.

"Oswego was the last place where I stopped," said Hiram.

"Did you come by boat?"

"I did, and I am going back by boat, too."

"Where?" exclaimed Amos instantly excited. "Whose boat are you going in? What kind of a boat is it? Are you going alone? Why don't you tell me about it?" he added as his brother shook his head and laughed at his companion.

"You don't give me a chance," replied Hiram, "to say much, but I came to Sackett's Harbor on official business."

"On what?" demanded Amos, as he stopped and stared blankly at his brother.

"On official business," replied Hiram, his black eyes twinkling with mischief. "General Dearborn wanted to see me."

"The general never knew there was such a fellow as you, Hiram Proper! What are you talking about?"

"I am telling you the truth," replied Hiram. "He told me he was more glad to see me than any man he had seen in a month."

"There is no accounting for tastes, that is all I can say," replied Amos.

"You see, he appreciates the value of my services."

"I am glad somebody does. Did he really say that to you?"

"He did."

"What made him say it?"

"I cannot tell a lie, Amos," laughed his brother. "G. Washington and I are enough alike to be twin brothers."

"Grandmother said that Washington was a very modest man."

"Yes, that is another thing in which we are alike." However, as Hiram saw that his younger brother was feeling somewhat hurt by his bantering, he suddenly changed his manner and said, as he flung his arm about Amos's neck, "Honest Injun, Amos, I brought a letter from Niagara for General Dearborn. I guess when he saw me with that letter in my hand, that may have had something to do about his being more glad to see me than any man he had seen in a month. I have done all that I have been told to do, so I guess there is no harm in telling you about it now."

"And we can go home?" inquired Amos mollified by his brother's manner.

"I can," replied Hiram.

"Aren't you going to take me?"

"If you are a good boy," replied Hiram, "per-

haps I will stow you away somewhere, but you mustn't talk any more as you did a few minutes ago."

"About what?" demanded Amos.

"About my baby brother being able to put me on my back."

"If you will wait a minute," exclaimed Amos, "I will show you that right away."

But Hiram eluded his grasp and the two continued on their way.

It was agreed that they were to sleep that night in the little catboat in which Hiram had come with his message for the commander of the northern army. To the delight of Amos, neither he nor his brother was even accosted by any of the guards, and to Hiram's statement "that the soldiers were too busy to pay attention to a boy of Amos's size," the younger brother did not reply though his manner again showed that there were protests which he might have made.

The night, when it settled down, was unusually warm. Wrapped as the two brothers were in the woolen blankets, which their mother had made for Hiram when he had first enlisted, sleeping in the open catboat was not uncomfortable, though the spring weather still was somewhat backward.

"Hiram," said Amos, when at last they were ready for the night, "who was that fellow that said he had the same name I have?"

"I haven't the remotest idea," replied Hiram sleepily.

"He certainly was not any more modest than you and G. Washington."

"Wasn't he?" drawled Hiram.

"No, he wasn't, and what's more, I believe that lieutenant let him get away."

"Do you?"

"Yes, I do, and I think he ought to be shut up in the guardhouse himself. It is the only place where he will be safe. I would like to find out what became of that fellow before we leave Sackett's."

"Why don't you?"

Amos gave several explanations why investigations on his own part might not be approved by the men in command, but seeing that his brother was no longer listening, soon the wearied lad also became silent and in a brief time was asleep.

The following morning brought no answers to Amos's questions of the night before. Who the man was that had claimed his name, whether he had been permitted to go free, or was still confined with the other British prisoners, Amos did not find out. However, as he and Hiram were to depart soon after sunrise in the little catboat in which the latter had made his voyage to the region, other matters were speedily forgotten. The deep feeling of satisfaction at being once more in the company of his brother and the thought that he was soon to return to his home, as well as the novelty of the voyage to Oswego were all sufficient to hold Amos's interest and attention.

The little waves in the harbor were capped with white, the wind was blowing strongly toward the open lake when the boys set sail. The sight of the fleet of Commodore Chauncey riding at anchor, as it was, in the sheltered bay, was most imposing. The muzzles of the great guns, the activity of the men on the decks, the tall masts and the manifest power of the fleet, were all impressive to the boy, who but once before, had ever seen even a gunboat. Doubtless these rude men-of-war on the waters of Lake Ontario in that year of 1813, if by some possibility they should become visible to the boys of 1913 would evoke only a smile. The fleet would seem as strange as the garb of the men who trod its decks. However, neither Amos nor Hiram had any thought of the century in advance of them and consequently were duly impressed by the power of these fighters of the Lakes, and were glad to be permitted to depart without undue delay.

Once in the open lake, however, the wind died away and the white caps soon disappeared, while the catboat at times scarcely seemed to be moving.

"Want me to take an oar and lend a hand?" inquired Amos, as he glanced at the long oars with which the craft was equipped.

"Time enough for that later when we have to," replied Hiram good-naturedly. "The wind on the lake may spring up in a minute; it is as changeable as a

girl. I want to get as far as Snow-shoe Island by noon, if we can, and stop there for dinner."

"Where is Snow-shoe Island?" inquired Amos.

"It is right ahead of us. We can see it now," replied his brother pointing to a stretch of land a half mile or more distant.

"Why do they call it Snow-shoe?" asked Amos.

"I don't know any more than why they call the sun the sun. Take your oar now, if you want to see if we can make it. I would let you take the tiller, but I am afraid you might hit a rock somewhere."

"I won't be any more likely to hit a rock than you," retorted Amos.

"Oh, yes, you would," replied his brother with a laugh. "You have never sailed this sea."

"You haven't been over it but once," retorted Amos.

"Once is better than nothing, and besides some people don't have to sail a thousand times over the same region to find out where the best course is."

"What's that smoke on the island?" inquired Amos, pausing for a moment in his labors at the oar.

"Where is what smoke?"

"Right yonder, just over that clump of maples at the right."

"I don't know what it is," said Hiram after a little time had elapsed and he had looked intently at the little pillar of smoke that was rising from the shore.

“We’ll chance it, however. I guess there aren’t any redcoats along here. You take the tiller and put it hard up, and I will take your oar and stand in the bow and look out for rocks.”

For a brief time the catboat was slowly sent toward the shore, opposite the spot where the smoke was seen. Neither of the boys had spoken, but Amos was not convinced by his brother’s silence that he was entirely without anxiety.

“What is that on the bank at the left?” suddenly inquired Amos in a low voice. As Hiram looked back the lad pointed toward a huge ledge on which men were to be seen.

It was manifest also that the catboat had been discovered and that the men who were waiting on Snowshoe were interested in its approach.

“Can you see?” inquired Hiram in a low voice, “whether the men have any uniforms or not?”

“No,” replied Amos.

“How many do you make the number?”

“Two.”

“That’s all I can see,” said Hiram. “I don’t like to run in too close without knowing better who they are.”

“We can soon find out,” replied Amos, as his brother returned to the stern and once more took the tiller in his hands.

The approach of the little catboat was slow and sev-

eral minutes elapsed before either of the boys could determine what the garb of the waiting men was.

Amos, who was seated beside his brother now, having abandoned his attempts to row, suddenly said in a low voice. "They are British!"

"Yes," assented Hiram, looking intently at the two men who were standing on the high ledge.

"I know who they are, too!" continued Amos in increasing excitement.

"Who are they?"

"One of them," said Amos, "is a sailor from the *Duke of Gloucester* and his name is Tom, and the other is that fellow that palmed himself off yesterday as having the same name that I have."

"Are you certain?"

"Yes! And they know who we are, too!" he continued, as the two men on the shore seemed to be conversing eagerly. "What do you suppose they are doing here?"

"I haven't any idea," replied Hiram. "Though I can see that they are very much interested in what we are doing, or what we propose to do."

"What do you propose?"

"I shall show you soon," replied Hiram as, placing the tiller in the hands of his younger brother, he advanced to the bow of the catboat.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHANGING CREWS

“**A** HOY! Come ashore!” shouted one of the waiting men.

“Who are you?” retorted Hiram.

“Friends,” was the response.

“How many are there of you?”

“Only two.”

“What are you doing here on this island?”

“Waiting for you,” was the response.

“I don’t think we will land.”

“But you must!” shouted the man. “We are stranded. We haven’t anything to eat and we cannot leave the shore. You will have to come and take us aboard.”

“How did you get here?” called Hiram, as the little catboat came within one hundred feet of the sandy strip.

When the two brothers had departed from Sackett’s Harbor, each had taken with him a flintlock, and a huge horsepistol. In addition, flints, powder horns, and bullet pouches were provided and both boys believed their voyage to Oswego would be safely made. They were confident that no British gunboats were

near, and even if any should be seen, it would be comparatively easy to land from the catboat and obtain a hiding-place among the forests that, for the most of the voyage, grew close to the waters of Lake Ontario.

Hiram glanced questioningly back at his brother, as if he were warning him to be ready for any treachery on the part of the two men who had hailed them. Apparently neither of the men was hostile, at least in his manner. Amos had easily recognized the old sailor of the *Duke of Gloucester* who had befriended him on so many occasions. Of his friendly feeling he had no doubt, but his companion, who had claimed the name which Amos believed to be solely his own, was a man unknown and naturally the lad was suspicious of his motives.

"Run in a little closer shore, Amos," said Hiram in a low voice, as he again turned for a moment to look behind him. "I have my gun close by and you must keep yours where you can put your hand upon it in a second. We don't know these fellows, and they may be planning some mischief for us."

"Don't land," suggested Amos. "We are safe in our boat, anyway, and nobody knows what may happen if we go ashore, nor how many of these men there may be on Snow-shoe."

"There are only these two," replied Hiram confidently. "If you and I can't hold our own against

them, then they may take us with them wherever they are going and welcome."

Amos said no more, though he was by no means convinced that his older brother was acting wisely.

In a brief time the sail of the catboat was lowered and the anchor was cast out from the stern. The water, as the boys saw, was only two or three feet in depth and it was possible almost anywhere to wade ashore.

"Keep your gun in your hand, Amos," said Hiram in a whisper to his brother. "Don't get your powder wet. Keep your eye every minute on these fellows!"

"I don't see why you want to land," protested Amos; but as his brother made no response, the lad stepped carefully over the side of the boat into the water, and followed Hiram, as he led the way to the shore.

There had been no sign of any disposition to dispute their approach on the part of the waiting men, and when at last the shore was gained Tom said, "Look 'e 'ere, lads. What 'ave 'e in the locker?"

"Not much," replied Amos.

"A little is more nor we 'ave."

"Tell me first," broke in Hiram, "what you two men are doing here. How did you get away from Sackett's?"

"I got away on account of my name," spoke up

the second sailor, and a broad grin appeared upon his face as he spoke.

"But that is not your name!" protested Amos quickly.

"How does the lad know it is not my name?" inquired the sailor as he turned, in a pretended puzzled way, to his companion.

"The name served a good turn, anyway," retorted Tom, with a laugh. "Which lets my friend out and my friend lets me out," he explained.

"So that is the way you both escaped, is it?" asked Amos.

"A man doesn't escape," laughed the sailor, "because he gets out of the guardhouse."

Hiram, who had taken but little part in the conversation was watching both men with an expression on his face that betrayed his perplexity. It was manifest also that Tom, the older of the two sailors, was aware of the feeling in the heart of the young soldier. Facing him he said, "Don't 'e be afraid, lad."

"I am not afraid," replied Hiram promptly.

"Well, then don't think 'e must take us back to Sackett's Harbor!"

"Why not?"

"We'll talk more about that after we have seen what you have to eat. We 'ave a fire all waiting for 'e. We'll share a bite first, and then talk about the other part afterwards."

Hiram smiled and nodded to his brother to follow the two men as they led the way across the strip of land toward the smoke, which the boys had seen when they had approached the island. The shimmering waters of the lake were almost mirror-like in their smoothness. The sun was pouring down its rays upon the great expanse of water, almost as in a summer day. In the clumps of bushes and low trees that were growing here and there upon the island, the songs of birds could be heard, and Amos was impressed most of all by the hundreds of gulls that were circling about the region, or standing in multitudes upon the strip of sandy beach. Like a fine thread, the shore of the distant mainland could be seen. The lad concluded that they must be several miles out in the lake. No other islands were to be seen.

As they approached the fire Amos and Hiram, who were walking along the shore still carrying their flintlocks with them, saw that the opposite side of the island here was rough and rocky. The water too in places was very deep even close to the land.

When the boys approached the fire they saw that there were several birds ready for roasting. Noticing the glance of Amos, Tom said good-naturedly, "Seagulls is not the best heating in the world, but it is better nor crow, besides it is a bit easier to knock over a gull with a club or a bit of a rock than it is

to catch any of the bass in the lake, when you 'aven't any hook or line."

"Is that all you have to eat?" inquired Hiram.

"It is," replied Tom. "Beggars can't be choosers."

"We have something on the catboat, I think. I will go back and get that?"

"I will go with you, Hiram," spoke up Amos promptly, whereat Tom laughed and said, "Don't you be skeared, lad. Nobody will hurt 'e, leastwise, before we find out what the catboat has on board. 'Ere, lad," continued Tom, as he pushed a small skiff out from the bushes, and held it by its long painter, as it floated on the water. "Take this, and 'e won't have to wade ashore."

Both boys glanced quickly at the little skiff and then looked meaningly at each other. It was plain now how the two men had escaped from Sackett's Harbor, and made their way to Snow-shoe Island. The "freedom" which the name had brought to Tom's companion was not quite so apparent now as it had been, and both were convinced that the sailor in some way had outwitted his guard and then had aided Tom also to escape.

"Amos, you take the skiff and go back to the catboat and get some of the bacon and some other things for our dinner," said Hiram.

"Will you stay here?" asked Amos in a low voice. "Will it be safe?"

“I am all right,” laughed Hiram glancing meaningly at the two flintlocks which were in their hands.

“You had better take mine, too,” said Amos, handing his gun to his brother.

“All right,” laughed Hiram, as Amos speedily entered the skiff and began to row toward the lower end of the Island.

There was no conversation while the boy was gone, perhaps the two guns, which were in the possession of Hiram, having something to do with the silence.

In a brief time Amos returned in the skiff and as soon as he landed placed the few provisions which had been brought from Sackett’s Harbor, on a rock on the shore. The sight of a prospective dinner manifestly was more interesting at the time to the two British sailors than thoughts of escape or even of the success of their nation. Indeed all four men were hungry.

When at last the small and savory meal was served, the suspicions which the men had of one another somehow seemed to be cast into the background. Apparently the thoughts of war and of the terrible struggle which then was going on between the United States and the mother country were forgotten. Even the scene itself was indicative of peace. The little curl of smoke rising from the ashes of the fire which had been kindled among the rocks on the shore,—the sight of four men seated near by on the grassy bank,—the clear waters of the lake, the almost cloudless

sky,—all blended in a picture which was one of peace and not of war.

When, however, the simple meal had been eaten, as the wind had not yet arisen, departure, at least for Hiram and Amos, was still impossible. Neither of the two boys was unmindful of the possible danger which beset them and they remained seated a little apart from their companions. The feeling of good-nature, however, was apparently uppermost in all, and it was Hiram who said, "What a shame our two countries cannot get along as peacefully as we four are here. We might, too," he added, "if you didn't try to 'press' our men."

"'Once a Briton always a Briton,' " spoke up the sailor who had assumed Amos's name.

"We'll show you that this is not true before this war is ended," retorted Amos sharply.

"General Hull at Detroit didn't seem to show very much of it," remarked Tom dryly. "He seemed to be willing to let General Brock 'ave his army and hall 'e had."

"General Hull was a coward and a traitor," declared Amos hotly. "He sold out for British gold," and the boy began to sing,—

"Let William Hull be counted null,  
A coward and a traitor;  
For British gold, his army sold  
To Brock,—the speculator."

"You have a young man out on Lake Erie who is likely to make trouble, I am told," suggested Amos's double.

"Who is that?" asked Hiram quickly.

"His name is Perry. I am told he is from Rhode Island and is as full of fight as an egg is of meat. At the same time he won't be able to do much against our Jackies."

"What is he doing now?" inquired Hiram.

"I hear he is building a fleet. A man has to build his own boats as well as fight in them, here in this wilderness."

"Our fleet seemed to do all right at York, anyway," spoke up Amos.

"That won't bother us any more than a flea bite bothers a dog," laughed the sailor. "You go back and you will meet a warmer reception than you had the other day."

"But we brought away over two hundred and ninety prisoners," asserted Amos.

"Two of whom are here with you," laughed the sailor. "And that brings up the question, what are we going to do now?"

"I know what Amos and I are going to do," said Hiram quietly.

"What's that?"

"We are going to set sail. There's a little wind coming up and those clouds yonder look as if we might have more."

"Are you going to take us with you?" spoke up Tom.

"That is what I have been thinking about," replied Hiram. "I am headed for Oswego, and if you come with me you may be safer there than you were in Sackett's Harbor. I don't know but I ought to take both of you, for I am not sure you would be better off than when we saw you here on Snowshoe."

"We will go with 'e and take our chances," spoke up Tom promptly. "I don't like the look o' this island, hand our skiff is not good for riding hout the gale."

"I might shut you in the hold," suggested Hiram.

"No, you let us sit for'ard, and keep your guns with you and we won't give you any trouble," said Amos's namesake with a grin that was intended to be reassuring.

"That's what we'll do," said Hiram promptly, as he arose, "and we'll set sail right away. There is a puff of wind and that means that where there's one there will be another."

"It's likely to be plenty of wind before sundown," said Tom, as he looked toward some clouds that were rising in the west.

Conversation ceased as Hiram bade the men stay where they were while he and his brother at once prepared the catboat for their departure.

When these preparations at last were completed,

Amos pushed the skiff ashore and bade the men come out to the boat in it. There was no delay and they soon were on board the catboat taking their places obediently in the bow, while Amos made fast the skiff and took it in tow. Sitting close to his brother with the two flintlocks so placed that each could be seized if occasion demanded, the lad soon lost his fears as the boat drew away from the island.

The wind held well and for a half hour steady progress was made as Hiram sailed toward Oswego. He was unfamiliar with the region but believed that he would be able to make the harbor that night if the wind continued at all favorable.

In accordance with the predictions of the old sailor, Tom, the wind soon began to rise, until at last the little boat was tossing over the boisterous waves of the lake, which were quickly aroused by any strong breeze. White caps now were dashing their spray over the faces of the boys, and the prisoners in the bow soon were thoroughly drenched.

"We'll have to take a reef," said Hiram at last, directing his younger brother to take the tiller while he himself advanced to the bow to take in some of the sail. He had however scarcely stepped on the deck, before, with a sudden push by Amos's namesake he was sent overboard and in a moment was far behind the racing boat.

"Get into your skiff, lad," called Tom to Amos. "It's your only way to save your brother. We are

desperate and not going to Oswego with you. Take your choice! Is it into the skiff you go to save your brother, or do you go with us across the lake to York?"

Without replying, Amos quickly jumped into the skiff and as he leaped on board, the painter was cast off and in a brief time he had been left far behind.

Then for the first time the lad was fully aware of what had befallen him and his brother. Hiram was struggling in the midst of the tossing waves, while he was in a skiff without any means of defense, both guns in his haste having been left on board the cat-boat.

## CHAPTER X

### RETAKEN

HASTILY righting himself Amos took his seat and grasping the oars began to row in the direction in which he had last seen his brother. The rolling waves prevented him from seeing just where Hiram now was, but aware of the general direction, the lad was pulling with all his strength. He saw the catboat speeding away and rapidly increasing the distance between it and the helpless brothers. Convinced now that no help was to be expected from the men on board, he redoubled his efforts, exerting all his energy in his efforts to rescue Hiram from his perilous position. His progress necessarily was slow and his fears increased when, after repeated efforts to see where his brother was struggling in the wave, he had been unable to discern him. At last however he saw Hiram's arm raised in the distance.

Made doubly anxious by what might be a final appeal for help, Amos exerted himself as he had never done before. The heavy skiff moving against the wind was driven by his steady efforts toward the place where the arm had appeared for a moment. It was useless to shout or call and the lad reserved all his

strength for the effort required in driving the skiff against the wind and waves. In spite of the obstacles some progress was made and the next time he obtained a glimpse of his brother he was delighted to discover that the very difficulties which had beset him had been a help to Hiram. He was being steadily driven toward the approaching skiff.

At last only a few yards remained between Amos and his brother. The waves were so rough that the skiff became doubly unwieldy, but at last Amos managed to reach his brother with the oar which he extended, and as Hiram grasped the blade he was drawn speedily to the side of the skiff.

The little skiff was nearly capsized in the efforts of Amos to pull his brother on board. But at last success crowned his efforts.

Hiram, dripping, and for a moment almost exhausted by his struggles, sat back in the stern of the boat, unable to speak. Amos's efforts were immediately required to keep the little boat out of the trough of the sea. For a time no one spoke.

As soon as Hiram regained a measure of his strength he pointed in the direction of the departing catboat and said, "Have they left us, Amos? They must have pushed me overboard, intending to drown me."

"They gave me the skiff," replied Amos, "and it's lucky for you that they did."

"Are they coming back?"

"They said they were going straight to York."

"They will go to the bottom if they try to cross the lake in such a wind as this."

"They are too wise to try that. They are more likely to land somewhere and wait until they get a fair wind."

"That's what we'll have to do, Hiram, won't we?" inquired Amos.

"Do what?"

"Why try to make the shore. We can't stay out here in the lake in this leaky old tub. Hadn't I better try to run before the wind and make the nearest shore I can?"

"Go ahead," replied his brother. "We'll have to take our chances."

The "chances," however, did not seem to favor the boys or boat.

The skiff was leaking badly. The oars were heavy and not adapted for use in such a little craft and despite Amos's endeavors the most he could accomplish was to keep the boat head on, permitting the wind to drive them toward the shore in the distance.

When Hiram regained more strength he insisted upon taking his turn at the oars though the exchange of seats had perils of its own. He had scarcely undertaken his task before his right oar snapped near the blade. An exclamation of dismay escaped from his lips at the mishap and he stared blankly at his brother.

"Take this oar," called Hiram, shifting his remain-

ing oar, "and see if you can steer with it! If we can keep on going before the wind we may be able to get ashore." Hiram's voice was trembling and he was more fully aware of their peril than he acknowledged to his younger brother.

The little boat appeared to be making greater progress than it really accomplished. Occasionally, in spite of Amos's efforts, it turned and twisted and several times the boys were in danger of capsizing. Each time, however, the boat finally righted itself and plunged forward into the splashing waves.

The sun, meanwhile, was dropping lower in the western sky and night was not far distant. The outline of the shore toward which they were headed was more distinct now, but still at least two miles intervened between them and the haven which they were seeking.

"We'll never make it," said Amos, his chin quivering as he spoke.

"Yes, we shall make it," replied Hiram, striving to keep up his own courage as well as that of the frightened boy. "Besides, the wind may die down at sunset. It does that very often."

But even Hiram ceased talking as the wind continued unabated and no signs of relief were to be seen. He looked at Amos, who was doing his utmost to guide their course with the rude oar in his hands. The catboat had long since disappeared. Their sole hope depended upon their ability to gain

the distant shore before darkness crept over the land. Had the end of all things come? Was the opportunity to which Hiram had so long been looking forward, of returning to his home, to be lost? If the little boat went down it was doubtful if any word ever would be received by the members of his family concerning its strange disappearance.

The thought was more than the young soldier was able to bear. Calling to his brother to be careful, he started to rise from his seat to exchange places. As he did so, he suddenly sank back on the seat with an exclamation of surprise.

"Look yonder," he exclaimed, as he pointed toward the open lake.

Glancing quickly behind him Amos saw not far away a sloop apparently following a course parallel to that of the boys. It was strange, he thought, that the boat had not been seen before. And yet there she was now in plain sight and apparently no more than a half a mile away.

"Can we make her hear?" inquired Amos excitedly.

"No," replied Hiram. "Our only hope is to get their attention somehow,—if we can. I will take my coat and put it on the end of this broken oar and try to make some one on board see our signal of distress. Keep tight hold of your oar," he added warningly, as in his tense interest, Amos for a moment neglected his task and allowed the skiff to be caught

once more in the trough of the sea. Both boys were thoroughly drenched now, but the little boat was righted, and headed again toward the shore.

For a time Hiram waved the improvised signal, but apparently his efforts were unseen on board the sloop.

To Amos's suggestion that the gunboat—for it was plain that the passing vessel belonged to the navy—might now see their signal, Hiram did not respond. The craft must be American he assured himself striving to maintain his courage.

"I will have to stand up and try it," he said at last. "I am afraid we are so low on the water that the watch won't sight us."

"He will have to see us pretty soon, or it will be so dark he never will find us."

"Keep up your courage, Amos," said Hiram, as, balancing himself carefully, he arose and renewed the waving of his coat in a last desperate attempt to attract the attention of the passing gunboat.

"Let's try a call," suggested Amos anxiously. "It won't do any harm and they might hear us."

Together the two brothers united in a shout that was loud and long; but the raging wind carried the sound toward the shore and both were convinced that the call for help could not be heard on board the sloop.

"She's American, all right," suggested Hiram. "Look at her flag."

The colors were visible now for the gunboat was nearer than when she had first been sighted. She was not more than a quarter mile distant.

“Will she come nearer?” inquired Amos trembling, as he watched the tossing sloop, which was so near and yet so far away that it did not seem possible their signal could be discovered.

“I don’t know,” replied Hiram desperately. “We must make her see us. Get down on the bottom of the boat for a minute and brace me. I am going to make one more desperate attempt to attract their attention.”

The younger brother did as he was bidden, and rising to his full height Hiram again waved the improvised signal. His arms were aching now and he felt as if he were attempting to lift impossible weights. It was his last desperate effort.

“They have seen us!” he exclaimed suddenly. “She’s coming up into the wind! That’s just what she’s doing! They are lowering a yawl, too! Yes, they have seen us. There are five men in the yawl,” he added as he anxiously watched the movements of the men.

“It isn’t a yawl, it’s a four-oared gig,” said Amos.

“I don’t care what it is,” said Hiram laughing loudly in his excitement. “If it’s only a raft that will come near enough to take us on board I shall be satisfied.”

It was manifest, however, that the signal had been discovered and that help was coming from the gun-boat. With the steady pulling of the men the gig swept nearer and nearer. It was soon possible for the excited boys to discern the men on the approaching boat. A young boatswain was seated in the stern steering the boat, while four sailors clad in the uniform of the United States Navy were pulling at the oars. In a few minutes the gig swept alongside, though the intervening time to Amos had seemed almost endless.

"Give us your painter," called the boatswain.

"We haven't any," replied Amos.

"Then stand by to take this rope!" said the boatswain, at the same time rising from his seat and balancing himself as he took a coil of rope which he prepared to throw.

Twice his efforts failed and the coil fell short, but his third attempt was crowned with success, and Amos managed to seize the end of the rope before it slipped over the side of the skiff.

"Hold fast!" called the boatswain. "We'll take you in tow."

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied Amos, as he made the rope fast. His face was shining when he turned to look at his brother, and saw that Hiram's excitement was scarcely less than his own.

"Who are you?" inquired the boatswain as the

skiff was drawn nearer. "Where did you come from? What are you doing out here in the open lake in such a craft as that?"

"We'll tell you all about it," replied Hiram, "as soon as we get aboard. What sloop is that?"

"That sloop' is the *Lady of the Lake*. I'll wait until I get you aboard before I ask any more questions."

Quickly resuming his seat, the boatswain ordered the men to give way and in a brief time the entire party was alongside the gunboat. A rope ladder was lowered, up which Hiram and Amos quickly climbed, and soon after were followed by the boatswain and his men, as soon as they had let the gig drop back to the stern of the sloop.

The *Lady of the Lake* meanwhile had resumed her course and as the wind still held strong, she swept swiftly over the tossing waves.

The rescue of the boys had been keenly watched by all the crew and as soon as the sloop had resumed her course, the captain, bidding Hiram and his brother follow him, led the way to his cabin. As soon as they entered, the officer turned to Hiram and said, "Who are you?"

"My name is Hiram Proper, and this is my younger brother, Amos. I have been serving in the army at Niagara, and was sent with a message by General McClure for General Dearborn at Sackett's Harbor. I gave him the message all right and then, as the

time for which I had enlisted had expired, I was to be permitted to return to my home."

"Where is your home?" asked the officer sharply.

"About one hundred miles up the shore from Oswego."

"Did you say your time had expired?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you start from Sackett's Harbor in that tub?"

"No, sir," replied Hiram in some confusion. "We had a catboat, which we were to use as far as Oswego. The wind died down and we stopped this noon at Snow-shoe Island. There we found a couple of men who had escaped from the guardhouse—"

"Escaped?" interrupted the captain. "Were they Americans or British?"

"British," answered Hiram. "They were captured at York."

"And escaped the guard at Sackett's Harbor?"

"That's what they said."

"What were they doing on Snow-shoe Island?"

"They said they had just stopped there to rest. They were in this skiff," Hiram added, his confusion increasing.

"And they took your catboat, and left you the skiff?" inquired the captain sharply.

"No, sir, we took them with us in the catboat. We had two flintlocks and they had no arms at all. We thought we could take them on to Oswego and turn them over to the fort there."

"Why didn't you do that? That was a good plan," said the captain, smiling grimly.

"The wind came up," exclaimed Hiram, "and I was afraid the catboat would capsize. While I was trying to take a reef in the sail one of them pushed me overboard. Then they gave my brother his choice between going on with them, or taking the skiff and trying to save me."

"And his choice was the latter?" inquired the captain glancing not unkindly at Amos, as he spoke.

"Yes, sir," replied Amos, "that is what I did."

"I will talk with you more about this a little later. Just now you can make yourselves at home, or keep out of the way and we'll take you to Oswego, where, if there is anything more I want to know, I shall be able to find it out."

Abruptly dismissed in this manner, Hiram and Amos walked toward the bow of the swiftly sailing sloop. Neither before had ever been on board such a craft. Her lines were beautiful. Her sails and rigging were new and her bow was cutting the waters like a knife.

The interest of the two boys continued keen in their surroundings for an hour or more, and they were not unmindful of the glances of curiosity which were frequently given them by the members of the crew.

No one among the sailors, however, was recognized

as an acquaintance by either of the impromptu passengers, and as the boat sped on in her course, the interest in their immediate surroundings soon began to lessen.

The sun by this time was just above the western horizon. The eastern shore toward which, only a little while before, they had been struggling desperately to make their way, was scarcely to be seen. There was only a faint line where the sky and the waters seemed to meet.

The gale had ceased and the wind now was fair and not strong. At the rate at which they were moving, Oswego would be reached before many hours had elapsed. Suddenly Amos clutched his brother by the arm and as he pointed toward the shore he exclaimed, "Look at that sail, Hiram."

His brother instantly turned and looked in the direction Amos had indicated and after a brief silence said, "What do you make of it?"

"I cannot just tell," replied Amos, "but I think it may be our catboat."

"Go call the captain," said Hiram quickly. "Perhaps with his glass he may be able to tell us what it is."

The younger brother did as he was bidden and in response to his announcement, the captain brought his glass and at once came to the place where the boys had been standing. For several minutes he looked

carefully at the little sail in the distance and then handing the glass to Hiram said, "See what you can make of it."

"I think that is our boat," said Hiram after he had made his inspection. "Of course I can't be sure, but it looks like it and there is not likely to be any sail in this part of the lake at such a time as this. It's headed across the lake, too, and the men said they were going to try to make York."

Without another word the captain departed and in a brief time both boys were excited as well as pleased when they saw that the course of the *Lady of the Lake* was changed and that she was bearing down upon the little sail in the distance. It became evident in a little while that the catboat had discovered that she was an object of interest, for her own course speedily was changed and she was headed once more for the shore. The speed of the gunboat, however, was so much greater that she gained steadily upon the little craft and in the course of a half-hour Hiram was able, by means of the captain's glass, to make out that there were only two men on board. Amos's excitement increased greatly at the announcement and even the captain and the various members of the crew manifestly were interested now as the distance between the two vessels speedily decreased.

On and on sped the *Lady of the Lake* until at last she was within a hundred feet of the little catboat.

“What do you make of it now?” inquired the captain, as he was standing beside the boys.

“I am sure that is our boat!” replied Amos. “And those two men on board are the prisoners who were brought from York and escaped at Sackett’s Harbor.”

## CHAPTER XI

### A MYSTERIOUS EPISTLE

THE chase was ended and at the call from the captain of the gunboat the smaller craft was brought about and the sail was lowered. In a brief time it was hauled close to the side of the sloop and the two prisoners were taken on board and their recent boat was dropped back to the stern where it was made fast and the voyage of the *Lady of the Lake* was speedily resumed.

The interest of all on board had been centered on the two men and as soon as it was seen that each was wearing the uniform of a British sailor a shout went up from the Americans.

Disregarding the interest of his crew, the captain at once ordered the two men to follow him to his quarters, and as the prisoners quietly obeyed, the one who had assumed the name of Amos Proper suddenly looked up and found himself face to face with the lad. His expression of astonishment was so evident that Amos laughed and when he saw the consternation of the man Tom, who, aware of the interest of his companion, also glanced at the lad, and in open-

mouthed wonder was staring at the boy as if he had seen his ghost, the delight of Amos increased. But there was no opportunity for conversation, because the men were not permitted to stop and soon disappeared in the cabin of the captain.

"Hiram," said Amos, "who do you think those men thought we were?"

"They acted as if they had seen you before," laughed Hiram.

"Yes, and they didn't seem very glad to renew my acquaintance. It must strike them as a little strange to leave us out there in that old tub of a skiff and then after two or three hours have a gunboat swoop down from the lake and take them, and the minute they are on board to find themselves face to face with the men whom they had set adrift."

"'Men' is good," replied Hiram, laughing.

"Well, call us boys then; that's all I am, but I thought you counted yourself among the men of the army."

"The men of the army aren't very old," replied Hiram. "Colonel Scott says the army of Washington never averaged much more than eighteen years of age, and I don't think the armies in this war of 1812 are very much older, though they may be a little."

"Well, anyway," said Amos, "I am waiting to see these men again and wondering what they will have to say to us. Tom was a good friend to me and I

hope he won't have too much trouble with the captain."

As Amos spoke the boatswain, who had rescued them from their plight in the gale, approached and said, "The captain's orders are for you to report in his cabin."

"Both of us?" inquired Hiram in surprise.

"That's what he said."

"Then there is nothing for us to do, Amos, but to go and find out what he wants."

The two boys at once made their way to the captain's quarters where they were speedily admitted. They found Captain Taylor seated before a small table in his tiny room, and before him were standing the two men who had been taken from the catboat. "Amos" was apparently unconcerned and grinned good-naturedly at the entrance of the boys. Tom, however, was awkwardly twirling his hat and gazing at the floor. Manifestly his plight was troubling him and he had slight interest even when the two boys were summoned.

"Which one of you," inquired the captain, turning to the boys, "knows these men?"

"I saw them," replied Amos, "in York and then I saw them after they were taken to Sackett's Harbor. Indeed," he added, "I saw Tom," and he pointed to the sailor at his left, "before I went to York. He was one of the crew of the *Duke of Glou-*

*cester*, and when it came across the lake and the men landed on the shore near our place—”

“Why did they land there?”

“Because they were looking for a man who had been taken by the press-gang and had managed to get ashore.”

“Did you know who he was?”

“No, sir.”

“Did you see him?”

“Yes, sir; he came to our house.”

“When?”

“While he was trying to get away. He was black and blue and had been whipped with the ‘cat’ so many times that his body was a mass of bruises.”

“Did they get him?” inquired the captain, his face darkening with anger.

“No, sir. We hid him in the corncrib and covered him over with bags. They went around the place several times but they didn’t find him. They searched our house from cellar to garret, and finally when they went back they had not found their man and there were two of their gang that I had locked in our cellar.” Amos smiled somewhat consciously as he looked up and saw that Tom and his companion were staring at him and that his statement had been of intense interest to both of them.

“And the gang took you in place of the man who got away from them?” inquired the captain.

“They took me with them,” replied Amos, smiling.

“And did they give you the ‘cat’?”

“They threatened to, but I made up my mind that I would do what they told me until my chance of escape came.”

“And did you escape?”

“No, sir. I was on board the *Duke of Gloucester* when she was taken by our fleet and I didn’t have a chance to tell any one who I was until we were landed in Sackett’s Harbor, and there I had some trouble because this man,” and Amos pointed to his double as he spoke, “said he had the same name I have, and after my brother got permission for me to go and there was a call made for me, this man said he was Amos Proper and that the call was for him.”

“Is that the way you escaped?”

“I suppose so. I know I didn’t get away for some time and if my brother had not been in Sackett’s Harbor I don’t believe I would have gotten away at all.”

“What were you doing in Sackett’s Harbor?” inquired the captain, as he turned to Hiram.

“I was sent there with a message from Niagara, sir, as I told you when we first came aboard the *Lady of the Lake*.”

“Yes, I recollect,” said the captain, “and I think you told me also that your time had expired.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Hiram, “and I was in the cat-

boat on my way to Oswego. We were to have the boat as far as the Fort and then I was to go home the best way I could."

"Why do you want to go home again at this time of the year? We are just beginning our activities, and before the summer is ended Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, for the matter of that, will see some lively times. Perhaps you have heard what is being done on Lake Erie?"

"This man," said Hiram, pointing to one of the prisoners, "told me that a young captain named Perry, from Rhode Island, was building a fleet at Erie."

"How did you know that?" demanded Captain Taylor, turning sharply to one of the prisoners.

"I am thinking every one in the British Army and Navy knows what is going on on Lake Erie," retorted the second "Amos" unabashed.

Once more the captain turned to the two brothers and said, "You recognize these two men, do you, as the prisoners who escaped from Sackett's Harbor?"

"Yes, sir," replied Amos.

Again the captain turned to the prisoners and said, "I want your names. What is yours?" he added, looking at the sailor who had been Amos's friend in his time of need.

"My name is Tom 'Arris."

"And you are one of the crew of the *Duke of Gloucester*?"

"Hi were, sir."

"And you were taken prisoner by our fleet?"

"Hi were, sir."

"And escaped from Sackett's Harbor?"

"Hi wouldn't called it escaping hexactly, sir."

"What do you call it?" broke in the captain sharply.

"You see, sir," replied Tom, "it were this way, sir."

Abruptly breaking in upon the explanation, the captain turned to the second prisoner and inquired:

"What is your name?"

"Amos Proper," replied the man with a grin.

"That isn't his name," spoke up the real Amos.

"That's my name."

"What have you to say to that?" asked the captain turning sharply to the prisoner.

"My name is Amos Proper," said the sailor again, winking at the true Amos as he did so.

"If you give me a false name it will be the worse for you," retorted the captain. "Is that your name?"

"It is, sir," maintained the prisoner.

"Very well," said the captain, writing the name in the book before him on his desk. "And were you one of the crew of the *Duke of Gloucester*?"

"No, sir."

"Where do you belong?"

"I belong along the lake somewhere," replied the

prisoner. "I have served at Quebec, and I have been stationed at Montreal, and I was brought up the St. Lawrence to Kingston and I had just arrived at York a little while before your fleet came. I happened to be on board the *Duke of Gloucester* and that is the way it was that your men got me."

Amos noticed that Tom was staring blankly at his companion and that his declaration was as surprising to him as it was to the true Amos Proper.

"Captain Taylor," spoke up Amos quickly, "ask the other man what this fellow's name is."

"That's a good suggestion," said the captain with a smile. "What is his name?" he asked of Tom.

"I can't readily say, sir," replied Tom in some embarrassment, "seeing as I never saw him until the day your fleet came to York."

"What did you call him?"

"I can't recollect, sir, as 'ow Hi called him by any name, sir."

"You will have a chance, each of you," said the captain sharply, "to tell all you know about each other when we come to Oswego. Until that time I will have you kept in the fore-castle."

"There isn't much danger, captain," said the sailor who had appropriated Amos's name, "that we shall be able to get away from your sloop. Why not let us stay out on deck. We'll be glad to lend a hand anyway you want us to."

"Very well," replied Captain Taylor good-na-

turedly. "I guess there isn't much danger of your going ashore right away, and before we reach Oswego I will see that you both are looked after properly."

"Thank you kindly, sir," replied the sailor in a manner that, to Amos, seemed almost disrespectful. As the captain, however, apparently did not heed the manner of his prisoner, Amos did not feel called upon to make any suggestions, and aware that he and his brother were dismissed from the cabin, they both made their way to the deck.

"That other man means mischief. I don't see why the captain gave him the liberty of the deck when he is a British prisoner, and ought to be shut up," said Hiram when they once more were in the open air.

"I don't either," assented Amos. "I don't like the fellow and I believe he means mischief before we're done with him. Here he comes now," added Amos hastily, as the sailor was seen approaching the place where the two boys were standing on the deck.

"I believe your name is Amos Proper?" said the man mockingly as he drew near.

"That's my name," replied Amos, "and I only wish I knew what your name is, too."

"You ought to be familiar with my name," replied the man. "We'll have to call you Amos the First and I will be Amos the Second, or you can be num-

ber 1 and I'll be number 2. I wanted to be sure you were the man," he added banteringly. "If that is your name before I—"

"It is my name all right," broke in Amos angrily.

"Very good, sir," responded the prisoner, his smile becoming still more mocking, as he noticed the anger of the lad. "You see I have something which I thought perhaps I had better give you."

"I guess it doesn't belong to me," said Amos.

"No, it doesn't, but it is for your sister."

"For whom?" demanded Hiram promptly.

"For Prudy Proper," said the prisoner as he took a letter from the inner pocket of his coat and handed it to Amos. "That's the proper direction, is it not?" he added with a smile of meaning.

In surprise Amos took the letter and as he looked at the address he was silent when he saw that the man had spoken truly, for the missive was addressed to:

"MISS PRUDY PROPER,

"Kindness of Amos Proper."

"You see," continued the prisoner, "the letter was for your sister and was to be delivered to her by Amos Proper. From present appearances this Amos Proper," he patted himself on his chest as he spoke, "may be slightly delayed in his attempt to carry out the plans of the sender. You, however, are also Amos Proper and to you I will commit the care of

this epistle, believing that some time you may be able to return to your home."

The language and manner as well as the expression on his face were so puzzling to Amos that it was difficult for him to determine whether or not he was in earnest. The letter which he held in his hand, however, was evidently correct and Amos at once placed it within his own pocket.

"I don't understand," he said, as he looked up at the man.

"You don't have to," replied the prisoner. "No gentleman ever breaks the seal of a letter which has been directed to another, much less if the epistle chances to be written to a lady. If you will kindly deliver that epistle which was entrusted to me, I shall be your very humble servant." And the man bowed low and did not attempt to conceal the expression of mockery that appeared on his face as he did so. Amos looked questioningly at his brother and at a nod from him he decided to retain the message which had been given him.

Both the manner of its deliverer and the difficulty of understanding how he had come into possession of a message for his sister were matters for which Amos could not find any explanation at the time.

It was not long afterwards, however, before the prisoners were taken below, and the boys, after sharing the supper provided for the crew, were once more on deck.

The stars had appeared by this time and the waters of the lake were glittering like specks of silver in the wake of the swiftly-moving sloop. Apparently the offer of the boys to assist the members of the crew had not been accepted, and they were looked upon as passengers who were to be carried to the Fort at Oswego.

"What do you suppose this letter means?" inquired Amos of his brother when the boys were standing together by the rail.

"I haven't the slightest idea," responded Hiram.

"Do you think I ought to give it to Prudy?"

"I don't see any harm in doing that."

"Who do you suppose wrote it?"

"I told you I haven't the slightest idea. It may be a good while before she will have it, anyway, so I shouldn't worry very much about it," suggested Hiram with a smile, as one of the crew approached and told the boys where they would find hammocks slung for them, and to which they might retire if they desired.

The suggestion was at once acted upon and the brothers speedily disappeared from the deck.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE RETURN

EARLY the following morning when Hiram and Amos appeared on deck they saw that the *Lady of the Lake* had been made fast to the dock not far from the ancient fort, which had been erected at Oswego. As it was the first time either of the boys had been in the place their interest in the sight before them naturally was keen.

Sackett's Harbor had been made the headquarters of the Northern Army of which General Dearborn was in command at the time. Oswego was a general and important station on the southern shore of the lake and supplies for the army as well as equipments for those who were to march westward to Niagara, through what was largely an unbroken wilderness, had been collected here.

Here, also, were supplies which were to be taken, some by boat and some overland, to Sackett's Harbor. What the plans for the armies for the coming summer were to be, few knew.

Afterward it was declared that the leaders were without very definite plans at all and that this very

fact had led to much of the confusion and inactivity which marked the efforts of the Americans throughout the year 1813.

The victories on the ocean, which already had begun to make this year famous were at this time mostly unknown by the soldiers and sailors of the north. News traveled slowly and even when it was received the report oftentimes was treated as if it were a mere rumor. Indeed, rumors and reliable reports were so strongly mingled, to the confusion of the men, that it was difficult for any one to distinguish the true from the false.

Hiram and Amos Proper were deeply interested in the current reports which they heard at Oswego, but the desire of both boys was so keen to depart on their long journey homeward, that as soon as they had heard what the latest rumors were they were eager to be gone.

It was easy for them to obtain this permission and the captain of the *Lady of the Lake*, who apparently was more kindly disposed than most of the officers of that time, even suggested to the boys that they might take the catboat, in which they had set sail from Sackett's Harbor. The suggestion, however, was quickly opposed by the authorities at Oswego, who claimed that the little craft was needed by them. Against such a declaration there was no appeal, though each of the boys was permitted to take a flint-lock and a goodly supply of bullets and

powder, before they started along the trail which led to what was then known as the far west.

It was noon when Hiram and Amos left Oswego. Over the shoulders of each boy were slung the powder-horns and bullet-pouches, and with a rifle in the hands of each, they departed on their long and perilous journey. The season of the year, however, was one in which their traveling would be comparatively easy. The snows had disappeared and yet the weather was not yet intensely warm; besides, their way led through many a forest where the shade would be grateful in the heat of the day. It was true that there were dangers to be faced and in certain places there was the possibility of losing their way, but for the greater part of the journey a rough road had been made by the army for the transportation of its artillery and heavier supplies. In some cases, too, there were strips of corduroy road—roadways made of rough logs placed in parallel lines in the muddy places. A scanty supply of food had been secured, before the boys departed and they were hopeful of obtaining some game, which abounded in parts of the forests.

The walking they discovered was not difficult and they estimated that at least twelve miles had been covered when near nightfall they stopped for supper and to secure a place where they might sleep. Each of the boys carried a blanket strapped on his back and a few small tin cooking utensils.

"Here's our place," said Amos when they discovered a bubbling spring of water near the side of the road. Behind the spring were clumps of cedar trees growing on the slope of a small hill, or mound. Beyond this apparently there was a little valley on the farther side of which a high hill was to be seen.

"All right, lad," responded Hiram. "I guess you are ready to stop."

"I am no more ready than you are," retorted the younger brother, sensitive to any implication of inability on his part to keep up with his companion.

"Have it your own way," laughed Hiram good-naturedly, as he swung his pack to the ground and drew a huge knife from his pocket. "Which will you do," he added, "take this and cut some wood for the fire, or will you be the cook?"

"I'll cut the wood," laughed Amos; "then I can find fault with the cook and the cooking if I want to."

"Go ahead," rejoined his brother; and both boys were quickly at work.

In a few minutes Amos had provided a roaring fire, having first secured several flat stones out of which he fashioned an improvised fireplace. Strips of bacon were cut from the piece which had been secured before their departure from Oswego and placed in the small frying pan over the flames. Quantities of Indian-meal were stirred and boiled and then, by Hiram, were made into flap-jacks. Indeed the young

soldier prided himself upon his skill in the preparation of this part of their meal. It was a simple supper, but the hunger of the young travellers made them forgetful of its lack of variety and when at last it was ended both declared that they had had a supper "fit for a King." Later they secured a dry place among the trees on the hillside beyond, where they cut the balsam tips and made a bed on which, wrapped in their blankets, they slept soundly until morning.

When morning came the day promised to be one of the fairest that May could produce. The trees now were clad in their new garments of spring. The heat of the sun was tempered by the shade of the forest and the songs of multitudes of birds in the near-by trees all combined to make the time one that appealed strongly to Amos. The pleasure too of being in the company of Hiram, for he entertained all a younger brother's respect for his elder brother, as well as the knowledge that they were now free to continue on their way homeward, increased Amos's delight.

The breakfast which was soon prepared was not unlike the evening meal of the preceding day, but the appetites of the boys were keen, and neither complained of the lack of variety.

In a brief time both were ready to resume their journey and were about to depart from the camp when they were startled by the sound of the voices of men approaching from the rear. To Amos's sug-

gestion that they should withdraw into the bushes and permit the approaching band to pass, Hiram shook his head and insisted that both should remain within plain sight in the rough roadway.

It was not long before it was seen that a half dozen or more men were drawing near, but as there was no fear of their being from the enemy's lines their approach was eagerly awaited.

When the strangers discovered the two boys, the entire band stopped for a moment to make certain that others also were not with them. Confident that they had no one to fear, the band resumed its approach, to the place where Hiram and Amos were awaiting their coming.

"Morn'n!" called one who seemed to be the leader, as he hailed the boys.

"Good morning to you," responded Hiram. "You have an early start."

"Yes, we left Oswego soon after midnight. Did you come from there?"

"Yes, we left early in the afternoon."

"Where are you bound?"

"Just now," responded Hiram, "we are bound for my father's house, which is about seventy miles from here."

"Going to follow the corduroy road?"

"We expect to."

"We are going in the same direction. The more there are of us the safer we'll be, though I guess we

shall not have to be on our guard very much against any redcoats on this side of the lake."

"You can't always tell about that," replied Hiram. "Here's my young brother just now on his way home. The press-gang got him a few days ago and took him to York."

"Did they come on this side of the lake?" asked the man in surprise.

"Yes, they came right to our house. They were chasing a man who had got away from the *Duke of Gloucester*."

"Did they get him?"

"No, they didn't; but they took Amos in his place."

"How did he get away from them?"

"Why, he was taken to Sackett's Harbor with the crew of the *Duke of Gloucester* and there, of course, he explained who he was and they let him start for home. Where are you bound?"

"We're for Lake Erie," replied the man. "We're expecting to join young Perry and help him build his fleet."

"Good for you!" exclaimed Hiram with enthusiasm. "If I enlist again I'm thinking pretty strongly of going out there, too."

"You'll have to make haste if you want to get into action this summer."

"Is his fleet ready?"

"It ought to be. He has been working on it since winter."

"Where do you come from?" inquired Hiram.

"All along the line," laughed the man good-naturedly. "I sailed from Newport for New York, then sailed up the Hudson to Albany, and from Albany I have been working my way up to Oswego, sometimes marching with the troops and sometimes going alone. On the way up, these fellows joined me," he continued as he pointed to the men who were with him, "and maybe now you'll join the band, too. If we keep on this way by the time we see Lake Erie we'll have a very respectable company to add to the forces which Captain Perry has now."

"He came from Newport, too, didn't he?" inquired Hiram interested at once.

"He did that. Little Rhody can provide the men to sail the seas, if I do say it!"

"Then you belong in Rhode Island too?" laughed Hiram.

"I live in Jamestown, which is in the Providence Plantations, but this is all one so far as we are concerned now, though we still call our little State the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. I guess these men who are up here on these fresh-water ponds won't be sorry to have a few men who have had a taste of salt water to help them out in their troubles."

"What is your name?" inquired Hiram.

"Gordon Hopkins. My uncle was the first man in

the Revolution to have command of an American fleet."

The relative of the Revolutionary naval leader was a young man, not much, if any, older than Hiram. He was possessed of a strong, well-knit frame and black eyes, which showed the keen interest which he took in all that was occurring about him. It was manifest that his opinion of himself and his ability was not slight, but there was also an air of confidence which was somewhat reassuring. Indeed, both boys felt somehow drawn to the young man though his companions had not especially appealed to them.

In a brief time the journey was resumed and the men had not advanced far on their march before it became evident that although Gordon's knowledge of the sea might be all that he claimed for it, his experiences in the woods had been somewhat limited. It was Hiram who several times had to select the way and lead his companions into the rough roadway from which frequently they were tempted to stray. A stop at noon was made for dinner and the supplies which the newcomers provided added much to the enjoyment of all.

Amos, being the youngest in the entire party, was given the privilege of cutting the wood and looking after the fire while Hiram assumed the duties of chief cook. There was an air of enthusiasm and interest in the entire band which was most inspiring. Perhaps their ignorance of what lay before them in-

creased their fearlessness, but at all events both boys found in the company a pleasure that was keen. Gordon had many tales of the sea to relate and his enthusiasm over the victory which the Americans had already won on the ocean was so contagious that he almost persuaded his companions that the success might be repeated on the Great Lakes.

The young sailor's opinion of these fresh inland seas, however, was one of good-natured tolerance as he compared them with the great ocean upon which he had sailed since he was a boy. But Gordon Hopkins, as well as Hiram and Amos Proper, was soon to find that these "fresh-water ponds," as they were slightly termed, were to provide excitement greater than any of them had experienced.

About the middle of the afternoon of the third day of their journey Hiram and Amos led the way from the road and turned from the woods toward their home, which now was only a few miles distant.

Accepting the urgent invitation of the boys, their six companions followed them. The Proper home near the shore of Lake Ontario might be a rude affair and its quarters might be somewhat cramped, but its spirit of hospitality and welcome for the friends of its inmates was unquestionable, as the visitors soon were to learn. In spite of the long, wearisome journey both Hiram and Amos now began to walk more rapidly, the thought of soon being at home providing an additional incentive.

"There's More!" exclaimed Amos excitedly as in the distance sounds of a dog barking was heard.

"What did you call him?" inquired Gordon.

"More."

"Is that the name of the dog?" asked the young Rhode Islander in surprise.

"Yes," laughed Amos.

"Where in the world did you find that name, and what does it mean?"

"When he was a puppy," explained Amos, "an old sailor spent one night at our house and he wanted to name the dog after the one that he said took care of Lazarus, the beggar."

"Nobody ever knew the name of that dog," protested Gordon.

"This sailor said that Lazarus's dog was named 'Moreover,' and he wanted us to name our puppy that."

"Where did he find the name of that dog?"

"Why the sailor said it was gotten from the Bible—'Moreover the dog(s) came and licked his sores.' We all laughed when he told us about it, but he was so strong in his opinion and as we all liked the old fellow we told him we would do it, and so we called our puppy 'Moreover' and then shortened it to 'More.' Here he comes now!" added Amos eagerly as the sound of a body crushing through the brush was heard, and a moment later the dog plainly was seen.

In response to a loud whistle, the intelligent animal, which had stopped for a moment and stared at the approaching men as if he were uncertain what the character of his welcome ought to be, disregarding all other things ran swiftly to Amos, whining and crying, and frantically leaping about him and showing his delight at the return of his young master.

In a brief time the little company had advanced to a place from which the log house could be seen. Bidding their companions follow, the boys now began to run. "Who's that in the door?" inquired Amos abruptly as he saw a stranger standing there.

Instantly both boys halted and looked keenly at the man who was also plainly interested in their approach. Thoughts of the man who had escaped from the press-gang, as well as of the two British sailors whom he had shut in the cellar of the house, flashed through Amos's mind. Was the man before them a friend or an enemy? Quickly disregarding the questions and the fear that had arisen at the sight of an unknown man in his father's house, Amos called to his older brother and both boys ran swiftly toward the house, More following at the heels of the boys in his delight at the return of the long absent members of the household.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GUESTS

THE approach of Hiram and Amos, followed as they were at a distance by the men who had joined them on the way for Oswego, seemed to have a startling effect upon the stranger in the doorway. Abruptly he disappeared within the house, but Mr. Proper himself took his place and as soon as he discovered who the approaching visitors were, began to run to meet them.

The first impression of the boys was speedily forgotten in their eagerness to greet their father. As soon as these greetings were given both boys pushed past their father and rushed into the house where a similar scene was enacted when they discovered their mother and Prudy, both waiting to receive them.

"Who are the men with you?" inquired Mr. Proper when a measure of quiet had been restored.

"They joined us on the way from Oswego," explained Hiram.

"Yes, but who are they?"

"They are bound for Erie, where they are to join Captain Perry."

"How do you know they are?"

"Why they said so," replied Hiram in surprise.

"Our friend Simeon was suspicious of them. He thought they might be another press-gang looking for him."

"Who is Simeon?" inquired Hiram.

"Why, of course, you don't know," explained his father, "but while I was away it seems he came to the house one day when the crew of the *Duke of Gloucester* was chasing him. It was about the same time when Amos, here, disappeared," added Mr. Proper glancing affectionately at his youngest boy as he spoke. "We have kept Simeon here ever since, and now, Amos, tell us where have you been? Your mother has been almost distracted not knowing whether you had been shot, or drowned in the lake, or what had become of you."

"The gang took me," responded Amos, not without pride now that he had come safely through the event. "When they couldn't have the man they were looking for, they—"

"They took you, did they?" inquired his father.

"They did. And they carried me away in the *Duke of Gloucester*; but lucky for me right after they arrived at York the expedition from Sackett's Harbor came there and got me away."

"What expedition?"

"Why, haven't you heard about that, father?" Amos's feeling of importance was increasing rapidly for not only was he the center of attraction, as the

lost that had been found, but he was also to be the bearer of important and exciting news of events in which he had had no small part.

“Why,” continued the boy, “the Americans sent all their fleet over there and General Dearborn and General Pike brought their men. General Pike was killed and they took me away with the prisoners and if it hadn’t been for Hiram, I guess I’d still be shut up at Sackett’s Harbor and maybe sent to Kingston or Montreal.”

“Explain yourself, boy,” said his father sternly. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Why, the press-gang took me when they couldn’t find the man they were looking for,” repeated Amos still more excitedly, “and they carried me in the *Duke of Gloucester* across the lake to York, when the magazine blew up.”

“What magazine?” broke in his father.

“Why, the redcoats at York. It killed a lot of the redcoats and a good many of our men, too, and General Pike was one of them. Then they took the *Duke of Gloucester* and about two hundred and ninety prisoners, after the rest of the redcoats had run away, and sailed back to Sackett’s Harbor. When we got there I tried to tell some of them that I wasn’t a Jackie at all even if I did wear a uniform, and then Hiram helped me out and I came home with him.”

“What were you doing in Sackett’s Harbor?” asked Mr. Proper in surprise of his older boy.

“Why, I went there from Niagara,” explained Hiram, “with a message. It took me a little longer for my time was out; but I didn’t mind.”

“Yes,” broke in Amos, “and we took the two prisoners that got away,—”

“What is the boy talking about,” asked his father, nevertheless smiling at the lad as he spoke.

“Why, it was this way,” explained Amos. “When they said Amos Proper might be released there was another prisoner there who said that was his name and he walked out almost before any one knew what he was doing and he helped another man out too. They got our boat away from us and then the *Lady of the Lake* took them and we left them at Oswego.”

“This story,” said Mr. Proper shaking his head, “is all mixed up for me. You will have to tell me more about it some other time. We’ll talk about that afterward.”

While Hiram and his father and mother were busy, Amos beckoned to his sister to come with him out of the house.

“Who are these men?” inquired Prudy as she saw the six recent companions of her brothers lying on the grass near the house.

“They are some men who joined us on our way from Oswego,” replied Amos in an important manner.

Indeed Amos’s feeling that he was one of the chief causes in the excitement of the homecoming had

manifestly added much to his general air of satisfaction with the world at large and with himself in particular.

"I've got something for you, Prudy," he said, "but I don't know whether I shall give it to you or not."

"What is it? Why not?" demanded the girl.

"It is a letter," said Amos.

"A letter! Let me have it right away!"

"But I'm not sure that I ought to give it to you."

"If it's for me, you're not the judge of that at all," said Prudy. "Let me have it this minute!"

Amos took the letter in his hand and extended it toward his sister, but as she reached for it he abruptly drew it back and thrust it into his pocket.

"I guess I will ask mother about it first," he said.

"Give me that letter this minute!"

"What will you do if I don't?" inquired Amos banteringly.

"Take it away from you."

"You might try that if you want to, Prudy, but I don't believe you can do that any more. Honest Injun, though, if you can get it that way, I will let you have it."

"That's very kind of you," replied the girl scornfully. "If I can get it of course you will let me have it. You let me have it anyway, won't you, Amos?" she begged, her voice and manner quickly changing.

"Where did you get it?" she added.

"A man gave it to me."

"Who was he?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know?" she demanded. "Are you sure the letter was for me?"

"That's what it says," said Amos, drawing the letter from his pocket and looking at the directions, "Miss Prudy Proper," he read aloud, but he stopped abruptly, for the letter suddenly was seized by his sister, who ran swiftly toward the house with her brother in swift pursuit.

Perhaps the long journey which Amos had made had left him somewhat weary, but at all events he did not overtake the fleeing girl until she had arrived in the house where she instantly claimed the protection of her mother, who was beaming affectionately upon her lost boy, as he darted into the room.

"You're at your old tricks again, Amos," she said reprovingly, though she smiled as she spoke.

"What old tricks?" asked Amos.

"Why, teasing your sister."

"I'm not teasing her," said Amos. "She snatched something out of my hand."

"It was mine, anyway," asserted Prudy, "and it's no crime to take what belongs to you."

The girl looked fearlessly at her brother, confident that he would make no reference to what the possession was.

"Prudy," said Mrs. Proper quickly, "you and Amos must help me set the table. There are six

men who are to be here to-night besides our own family."

"Where's Hiram?" demanded Amos abruptly. "I want him to help, too."

"He's gone home," explained his mother.

"He might have stayed long enough to help us out," growled the boy, though there was no ill nature in his word or manner.

"He was anxious to get home," said his mother, "and I don't believe it will take him very long to cover the half-mile between our house and his."

"I guess it wouldn't, if he thought he had to do a girl's work if he stayed here," grumbled Amos. Nevertheless, the lad at once entered upon the task which was not unfamiliar to him, because within the past year he had been compelled not only to look after the farm but also to be helpful to his mother and sister as well. There were no opportunities for conversation concerning the letter which Prudy had secured while the others were in the same room with them.

It was not long before the guests were summoned and were seated about the long, rude table in the kitchen. Both table and house were the results of the work of Mr. Proper's own hands. The furnishings were so simple as almost to be crude and the fare was equally simple, but the warm hospitality was manifest, and at any event the manifest pleasure of the men in once more being able to share in a fam-

ily meal was even more evident than the satisfaction of the warm-hearted woman providing for her unexpected visitors.

For a few minutes there was silence following the simple grace that was said by the head of the household. Every man was busy in the task of rightly disposing of the food which had been heaped upon his plate.

Conversation, however, could not long be delayed, for the recent excitement in the Proper household as well as the exciting evidences of the war were continually in every man's mind.

Amos's story was again related and this time by means of certain questions, all the desired information was obtained. The lad was complimented upon his success in being made a prisoner in such a way that it eventually made him free and restored him to his home.

"It is not often," said Gordon, "that a man can work that. If it wasn't for going out to join Captain Perry, I would be almost tempted to try it myself if I thought I could get back to Newport that way."

"Do you know Captain Perry?" inquired Mr. Proper.

"Know Ol Perry? I should say I did!" replied the man enthusiastically. "He's a little older than I am; but we have shot yellow legs and gone blue-fishing and dug clams together ever since we could

toddle on the beach. He has been off on one or two voyages when I wasn't with him, but I guess I know him a good deal better than I know you, Mr. Proper."

"You'd have to if you know him at all," replied the host with a smile. "Why do you go out on Lake Erie?"

"I told you," replied Gordon in apparent surprise. "It's to join Ol—I mean Captain Perry. He is building a fleet there, you know."

"And some say he will never be able to use it."

"Use it?" exclaimed Gordon. "Use it? Don't you be in doubt that he will use it if he has to come straight up Niagara Falls, and do his fighting on Lake Ontario."

"I guess you mean he'll go over the Falls, if he went to fight on Ontario," spoke up Amos.

"Maybe so," replied Gordon with a laugh. "I don't know much about your geography out here. They tell me that is quite a good-sized waterfall."

"I think you will agree that it is after you have seen it and heard it. How many boats is Captain Perry building?"

"I don't know," replied Gordon. "He will build all he needs if he has money and men enough, and if he hasn't he will make what he has do the work just the same. You're going to be proud of that man some day, or I miss my guess."

"I have no doubt he is a very energetic young man,

but these are serious times and he will need something more than energy."

"There doesn't seem to be any too much of that shown up on these fresh-water ponds!" laughed Gordon. "One of your boys was singing every little while something about William Hull being counted null—"

"William Hull was a traitor!" said Amos promptly.

"Well, you don't seem to have been specially active even here on Lake Ontario, and what has been done at Niagara won't shake the British king on his throne very much, I'm thinking."

"It will take some time to prepare," suggested Mr. Proper.

"Yes, I heard about a Dutchman," said Gordon good-naturedly, "who was watching some men jump over a brook. The men would go back a few steps and get under good headway, and clear the brook all right. The Dutchman watched them and then had a bright idea. He thought if he went back farther than these men had gone, it would be easier still to jump over the brook, so he went back two miles and when he came to the brook he was out of breath and fell into the water, and couldn't jump at all. I'm afraid it is that way with some of your preparations up here on the lakes. I'm telling you, though, it won't be that way with young Perry!"

"I hope not," said Mr. Proper, quietly.

"I know it won't!" asserted Gordon confidently.

"He will try something, anyway. Maybe he will leave some of his preparations until afterwards, but he will try something! I was told before I left Newport that he had his younger brother with him. He is a little fellow not nearly as big as this boy of yours."

Amos looked up eagerly into his father's face and said, "Do you know how old I am?"

"Why, you are fourteen, aren't you, my son?"

"No, sir, I'm fifteen going on sixteen," replied Amos with great assurance.

"How long have you been 'going on' sixteen?" asked his father.

"Since the third of March."

"You haven't been 'going' very far."

"Well, I want to go farther," said Amos. "Hi and I talked it all over on our way from Oswego. He wants to go out to Erie and work on that fleet for Captain Perry and I want to go, too. I guess, if I can go to York and get away by being taken prisoner I have shown I can make some chips fly out in the shipyard."

As Amos looked up he saw a startled expression on the face of his mother, but disregarding it he continued earnestly, "A good many boys not as old as I am have gone and here Gordon Hopkins says that Captain Perry's brother is not as old as I am."

"There will be nobody here to look after your mother and Prudy and take care of the place," sug-

gested Mr. Proper, nevertheless showing by the expression of his face that the suggestion of Amos had appealed to him.

"You will be here this summer, father," protested Amos still more excitedly. "You can look after them, and let me go with Hi. There won't be any danger there," he added as he turned to his mother. "You see all we'll be doing will be to build some boats."

"What are the boats being built for?" inquired his mother soberly.

"Why, to drive the British off the lakes."

"Oh, then there will be something to be done besides building ships?"

"Of course," said Amos. "They are not going to let the ships rot on the stocks."

"We'll talk more about this later," said Mr. Proper; and Amos was aware that the conversation on that topic, at least, was ended for the present.

A few moments afterwards Prudy beckoned to her brother and when he joined her outside the kitchen door she said to him, "That letter was for me, Amos."

"Of course it was," replied her brother. "What I can't see is how that man ever got it. Who wrote it, Prudy?"

"You could never guess."

"All right then, tell me," said Amos.

"I shan't tell you."

"Yes, you will! Why not?"

“Because you would never believe what I said if I should tell you. It is the strangest thing!”

Despite Amos's continued pleadings, Prudy was firm and refused to disclose the contents of the letter or the name of its writer. She was, however, somewhat startled when she turned about to reënter the house to discover that Simeon, who had been a member of the household since his escape from the press-gang and the strange disappearance of Amos, was standing in the doorway, apparently listening eagerly to what had been said.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ABOUT CAPTAIN PERRY

“WHAT do you know about that man?” inquired Amos in a low voice as he and his sister turned to reënter the house as soon as Simeon disappeared from sight.

“Only two things,” replied Prudy, with a smile. “One is what he tells us about himself and the other is that he can eat more than any man I ever saw.”

“Making up for lost time, I guess,” laughed Amos. “The press-gang does not feed its prisoners very well.”

“You were a lucky boy to escape the way you did,” said Prudy glancing proudly at Amos.

As the brother and sister stood side by side the resemblance in the features of the two was almost startling. There were the same black eyes, the contour of their faces was almost alike and even in the height and weight the two were still almost on the same plane.

Amos’s thoughts, however, were turned now from the mysterious letter which Prudy had secured and whose contents she alone had read. She had not seen

fit to confide in her brother the message she had received and, not a little piqued by what he called the "contrariness" of Prudy, Amos perhaps was glad of some distraction that drew the thoughts of both to other things.

The continued presence of Simeon in his father's household was perplexing to Amos. The man himself apparently was peculiar. He had little to say concerning himself and still less to say to any of the members of the family. He had regained a large measure of his former strength and now ought to be ready for service somewhere, or so at least, Amos declared. However, when the lad once more was in the house and saw Gordon Hopkins and his companions conversing with his father, the boy's interest quickly was centered in what was being said.

"How old a man is this Captain Perry?" inquired Mr. Proper.

"Let me see," replied Gordon thoughtfully, "he was born in August, 1785. That would make him less than twenty-eight years old."

"He's a young man to be in charge of such a great work, as you suggest."

"It may never amount to anything," replied Gordon. "It is not said out loud, but it is common talk that he and Commodore Chauncey did not get along very well and Commodore Chauncey is sending him out there to be rid of him as much as for anything else."

“Has he had any experience at all?” inquired Mr. Proper.

“The first breath he ever drew was from the sea! The first thing he ever saw, next to his mother’s face, was the rocky shore and the roaring waves of the ocean! His father was a sailor before him, and it was as natural as breathing for young Perry to be interested in what his father was doing. He had seen the ships come and go, and from the time when he could toddle down to the dock he had heard the songs and the stories of the sailors. His father, too, had done a bit of fighting on the sea in the Revolution and so Ol was ready for anything that might come when this War of 1812 broke out. When the war first began he was put in command of a division, but he had about as much to do as he would have had if he had been cooped up somewhere in England. If there was any fighting to be done he wanted to have a share in it and so last February he was sent up here.”

“Up where?” inquired Mr. Proper.

“Here. He and his men were transferred to Lake Ontario to be under the command of Commodore Chauncey. He didn’t let the grass grow under his feet very long either. The sun had not set on the very day when he received his orders from the Secretary of the Navy before he sent fifty of his best men and officers to Sackett’s Harbor and within four days afterwards he had equipped and sent the full one hundred men.”

“Didn’t he go with them, then?” inquired Amos.

“Just as soon as he had made sure that his orders had been obeyed and everything had been done as he had directed, Captain Perry himself started in a sleigh on his long ride through the wilderness. There were reports when he came to Sackett’s Harbor that the British were going to attack that place and every day there were special watches kept for a sight of the British fleet. Two weeks passed, however, and nothing was done, so Perry and his men were sent to Presque Isle,\* to take up the work of fitting out a fleet there.”

“Fitting out a fleet!” exclaimed Amos. “I thought you said he had to *build* a fleet.”

“Yes, he had to do that, too,” laughed Gordon. “Why, his men, I am told, had to chop down the trees in the forests and fashion them with their own tools for the gun-boats and brigs and schooners that he was building.”

“You said his young brother was with him, didn’t you?” inquired Amos.

“Yes, I did,” replied Gordon.

“Wasn’t his brother younger than Captain Perry was when he first started in?”

“Ol Perry doesn’t look the part now, but when he was a youngster, his health wasn’t very good and I think that was one reason why his father, who was in command of a frigate, got the lad appointed as a

\* Erie.

midshipman on his own craft and took him to the West Indies."

"How old was Captain Perry then?"

"About fifteen."

"It was lucky for him he was with his own father," suggested Mr. Proper.

"You might ask him about that," replied Gordon drolly. "He was worked day and night. He had to do his studying besides all the other things that a midshipman is called on to do, but I guess that the biggest lesson he had to learn after all was to obey orders. Somehow that didn't come easy to him. But he told me the last time I saw him that that was the best as well as the biggest lesson ever set before him. He said a man never knows how to lead others until he has learned first how to follow some one."

"Did he keep on with his father?" inquired Amos.

"Oh, yes, for a while and he has been at it ever since. He sailed in the *John Adams* for the Mediterranean,—let me see, that was in 1802, and he had already had some pretty lively battles down along the shores of the gulf, before that time. Then three years after he went to the Mediterranean he was one of the crew of the *Constitution* and a little later, when he was twenty-two years old, he was appointed lieutenant and two years afterwards he was given the command of the schooner *Revenge*."

"How big a boat was that?"

"Fourteen guns."

“Whew!” whistled Amos. “And how old did you say he was then?”

“Almost twenty-two.”

“And he did his share as midshipman when he was fifteen?”

“That’s right, lad,” acknowledged Gordon.

“Just my age,” said Amos so soberly that all the men in the room laughed. Even Mr. Proper smiled as he glanced at the face of his eager boy.

“If his work aboard the *Revenge* had been all there was to it,” continued Gordon, “I am afraid he wouldn’t have been sent up here to the Great Lakes. Once not long after he was made captain his pilot ran the *Revenge* aground off the shore of Rhode Island. Captain Ol saw quick as a wink that his schooner was lost so he went to work to save everything that could be taken off the schooner. He got the sails, the spars and guns and even the personal belongings of his officers and men ashore and when at last the *Revenge* went down there wasn’t much more than just the hulk to sink.”

“It’s a wonder he didn’t lose his position after that,” suggested Mr. Proper.

“That’s what one might think,” acknowledged Gordon. “It did seem like pretty hard luck for a young chap like Captain Ol in his first command to run against such a misfortune as that, but after all I guess it helped to make him. He knew he might be blamed for the wreck so the first thing he did was to

demand a Court of Investigation. It didn't take this court more than a few minutes to find out that instead of being to blame, young Perry ought to be praised for his bravery and his quick wit in such an hour. You see the *Revenge* was fast aground on some sharp rocks and there wasn't any chance for him at all, so the court was pretty warm in its appreciation of what he had done in saving all the guns and the sails and even what belonged to the officers and men."

"I don't believe," said Amos, "that Rhode Island boys can do any better than the boys from New York State."

"You think if your father were to let you go with us that in a little while you will be in command of a schooner like the *Revenge*, too, do you?" laughed Gordon.

"I don't know anything about that," retorted Amos. "All I know is that I am as old as you say Captain Perry was when he went into the navy and I don't see why I can't have as good a chance as he did. I would like to go with you to Presque Isle anyway and see this man and lend a hand in building his fleet. I guess I can shoot as well as the average, and when it comes to a saw, my father doesn't think I am too young to pull one end of it when he's working at the other."

"Better let the lad start with us in the morning," laughed Gordon. "We'll keep an eye on him and see that he doesn't get into mischief."

"I'll keep an eye on him, too," suggested Amos.

"I'm afraid you will both be cross-eyed before the war is ended," laughed Mr. Proper.

The men who were guests in the Proper household, wearied by their long march from Oswego, were soon in bed. The novelty of being once more in his own home was too strong in the feelings of Amos to permit him to leave the room as soon as his companions had done.

Sitting with the family on the grass outside the house, he was compelled to answer many questions concerning the adventures through which he had recently passed and to describe again and again what he had seen of the successful attack upon York. His experiences at Sackett's Harbor also were of special interest, not only because of what the lad himself had gone through, but also because the place was the headquarters of the Northern Army, and what was occurring there was of deep concern to all who were interested in the struggle that was going on between the little new nation and the old.

Suddenly Amos inquired, "Whatever became of those two prisoners I shut in the cellar?"

"There!" exclaimed Prudy. "I told mother that you played that prank on us."

"Prank!" retorted Amos. "It wasn't a 'prank' and even if it was I didn't play it on *you*. I sent them down cellar to look for some cider and bolted the door on them after they went down the stairs.

Prudy, do you know whether they found any cider or not?"

"I never heard them say anything about it," laughed the girl.

"Well, what happened after the press-gang took me away?"

"Do you mean what happened to the men?"

"Of course."

"Why, when we missed you and waited for you to come back and you didn't come, we thought something must have happened to you, so mother and I got ready to do the work. I was going to milk the two cows and I had just left the door to go down cellar that very night for a pail, when out rushed those two men. We didn't dream there was anybody left about the place except the man who hid under the meal sacks in the corn crib."

"Did you yell?" inquired Amos.

"I don't remember. All I can think of is that one of the men gave me a push and then they both ran as fast as they could go down the lane toward the shore."

"Was that the last you saw of them?"

"Yes."

"They could not have reached the shore," said Amos thoughtfully, "until long after the yawl had gone back to the *Duke of Gloucester*, so their friends could not have taken them away. They must have spent some time on this side of the lake. It is a

wonder they didn't show up again and make trouble for you after they found out that you and mother were home alone."

"I wasn't afraid of them," said Prudy confidently.

"I have known lots of people to be brave after all the danger was gone."

"So have I!" retorted the girl sharply. "I have even heard of boys being taken away by press-gangs and being as brave as a lion all the time, that is if one could believe all one heard about their stories afterward."

"That's all right, Prudy," said Amos pleasantly. "There's no use in my trying to talk that way to-day, you always can think of one more thing to say than I can and after I think everything is all told."

"Of course," replied Prudy. "It's a pity you didn't learn that long ago!"

The brother and sister looked at each other with such admiration and affection that the striking resemblance between the two became still more manifest in the expression of their countenances.

"Amos," said Prudy in a low voice, "I believe father intends to let you go with Hi."

"What makes you think so?" demanded Amos instantly aroused.

"I can't give you all my reasons," replied the girl, "but you just wait and see if what I tell you doesn't come true."

"Will you tell me now what that letter was that I gave you?" asked Amos.

"No, not yet."

"Why not?"

"Because it was a letter to me and not to you."

"But who was it that wrote you a letter?" demanded Amos. "What I cannot understand is how that letter should have been in the hands of that man who stole my name."

"Maybe that is his name," suggested Prudy.

"It isn't!" said Amos confidently. "It can't be. I would like to know what became of him, too. He and Tom—"

"Who is Tom?" broke in Prudy.

"Why, I told you he was one of the crew of the *Duke of Gloucester* and was mighty good to me after the press-gang took me aboard."

"They are probably with the other prisoners by this time," said the girl.

"That's where they belong!" said Amos positively.

His sister laughed as she arose and said half seriously, half mockingly, "You are going to be a sailor boy, Amos Proper, and fight under Captain Perry."

"That's what I want," said Amos quickly, as they joined the family and soon prepared for the night.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE LONG MARCH

THE following day the visitors departed, the man who had escaped from the press-gang, however, still remaining a member of the household. As yet he had not given any intimation as to his departure for his home or as to his plans. He had explained only that his name was Simeon Jones. He entered quietly and simply into the home life and continued in the spring work on the farm in which he had been assisting Prudy up to the return of her father.

To the work of planting and other duties that must be attended to, Amos gave himself in the days that followed. Not a word had been said to him concerning the prophecy that his sister had made that he soon would be with the men who were building Perry's fleet at Presque Isle. There were days when Hiram too joined his father and brother and then in turn they went to his little clearing where they reciprocated the favor which had been given them.

The farm implements were few and rude, and almost every task required heavy muscular exertion on the part of the laborers. When night came Amos

usually was in bed soon after the sun disappeared beyond the western boundaries of the lake.

When three weeks had elapsed Mr. Proper said to his boy one morning when they were departing from the house to look after some rail fences which extended to the borders of the woods, "Do you really feel, my son, that you would like to go with your brother?"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed Amos eagerly, his face flushing in his excitement.

"You feel sure, do you, that you would rather serve there than at Niagara?"

"Yes, sir," replied Amos promptly. "I am not a lubber and what little I can do I can make count for more on the lake than if I was left on the land."

Mr. Proper smiled, as if the conviction of his son was not altogether disappointing, and then said, "Your mother and I have been talking over the matter and have decided to let you go with Hiram."

"And are you going to enlist again?" inquired the boy.

"Not this summer. After my term of three months expired I felt almost guilty when I left the army, but if you are to be away I don't feel that I ought to leave your mother and Prudy here alone with no one to protect them."

Amos, touched by the appeal to his own manliness, flushed again slightly and suggested, "Perhaps Sim-

eon will be able to look after them if you think you ought to go back.”

“Simeon is not one to be relied upon,” replied his father. “I know but little more about him now than when I first saw him. He has not explained who he is nor where he came from nor does he ever refer to what he proposes to do. I think he is harmless, but still I don’t feel that I could leave your mother and your sister alone with him to look after their wants. Perhaps another press-gang might land from some one of the British fleet and this time they might find the man they were looking for.”

“When does Hiram start?” inquired Amos unable to be silent long concerning the future which appealed to him now with renewed power.

“I think he is planning to leave day after to-morrow.”

“Will he go by boat?”

“No. He will follow the road to Niagara and from there have to take his chances of being carried to Presque Isle, or of making his way overland alone. I understand from Gordon Hopkins that Captain Perry is in great need of men and I have no doubt that you and Hiram will find others in your march who are intending to join Perry’s command.”

No reference was made that evening in the home to the proposed departure of Amos. People in those days were not demonstrative and even in the home

where the family affection was very strong, few indications of the presence of such a feeling were ever displayed. Children grew up to respect their father and mother, but compared with the boys and girls of our own time they did not have that intimate association or close confidence which is one of the best elements in the life of to-day. Even when the morning arrived when Amos was about to depart with his brother, there were few words spoken. That his mother was suffering was apparent to Amos, and Prudy's black eyes were shining even more than they usually did. As for Amos, despite his eagerness to go with his older brother, there was a strange lump in his throat when at last he spoke the simple good-byes, and started in the path through the woods that led to Hiram's humble home.

On his back was strapped a blanket which his mother had woven with her own hands, and inside the bundle were some articles not to be found in the equipment of the ordinary soldier. His own powder-horn and bullet pouch were taken with him and the trusty flint-lock which he carried on his shoulder had been used in many a shot which the lad had made at the prowling wolves or bears.

There was only a brief delay at Hiram's home and after his brother's young wife had started on the pathway toward his father's house, of which she was to be an inmate during the three months which the

boys expected to be gone, the two brothers, both strangely silent, resolutely started on their long march.

At Batavia they were fortunate in finding a small company of men on their way from Albany to Niagara. The boys then joined this departing band and proceeded with them on their journey. The new companions were a somewhat nondescript crowd, some of them being clad in uniforms while others were wearing the homespun garments which had been made in the homes from which they had come. Some of the men were young, being little older than Amos, while others were nearer his father's age. In the most of them, however, there was manifest a resolute purpose to do their utmost to drive back the redcoats and establish the right of the new country to claim as well as protect its own men. The line of march was somewhat broken and but few demands for an orderly procedure were made. There were places where the men marched in single file after the manner of the Indians, then again they would be marshalled in order and for a time present something of the appearance of a band of soldiers. The intercourse between the men was somewhat free and the distance between the officers and the company were not always observed.

On the second day Amos found himself marching beside a boy perhaps two years older than he. His companion appeared to be much more experienced in

the ways of the world than the boy by his side, and seemed to enjoy the privilege, in giving advice and magnifying the youthfulness of Amos Proper. For a time Amos made no protest, but at last when the stories of his comrade became so "large" as to be unbelievable and his condescending manner was made still more manifest the heart of Amos rebelled within him.

"My name," observed Amos's companion, "is one I think you must have heard."

"I never heard it," replied Amos. "What is it?"

"Walter Raleigh."

"Yes, I have heard that name," said Amos slowly. "Did you ever hear mine?"

"No, what is your name?"

"George Washington," replied Amos without changing the expression of his face.

"Yes, I have heard that, too," said his companion with a laugh. "George Washington is a boy though, compared with Walter Raleigh."

"What did Walter Raleigh do?" asked Amos.

"There have been several by that name," laughed the young soldier. "One came over to America to found a colony and to try to find gold. He found that he couldn't found a colony and he found that he couldn't find gold, so he went back to England, and told them they might have his head."

"Yes, I understand," said Amos. "There have been several of us named George Washington, too."

One George threw a silver dollar over the natural bridge in Virginia. I think that if I ever found a silver dollar I wouldn't throw it away."

"Of course you wouldn't," said his companion cordially. "But Walter Raleigh always had all the money he wanted."

"Did he?" asked Amos. "Well, if he lived where I do he wouldn't have been troubled by it. I never see much money. Sometimes when I sell my potash I get a few shillings for it. That's about all I ever see."

"Potash?" inquired his companion. "What's that?"

"It's a lye."

"It's a what?" repeated "Walter Raleigh," sharply.

"It's a lye," said Amos again.

"Are you talking to me?" demanded the older boy.

"Of course," replied Amos in a matter of fact tone.

"You call me a liar?"

"I don't have to," replied Amos. "Everybody knows that Walter Raleigh could tell some big stories."

"But you said something about a lie."

"I didn't mention it."

"What was it you said you sold, then?"

"L-y-e."

"Either you are crazy or I am," said the older lad.

"I'm not crazy," said Amos promptly, "so if one of us is crazy you know which one it is."

For a moment the young soldier glared at his boyish companion as if something personal had been said and it was his duty to resent an implied charge of being dishonest. However, the march was continued without any further manifestations of anger and as the hours passed the boys' stories not only increased in number, but in magnitude. One would relate an instance in which he declared he was the important character, only to be followed by a story still more improbable by the other.

As the days passed and they came nearer the end of their journey, the feeling of affection in Amos's heart for his boyish comrade increased. In spite of his ways and manner of condescending to his younger companion, Amos was aware that behind it all there was a feeling of affection that was steadily increasing. Of Hiram he saw but little in these days, though his brother was marching only a few lines in advance.

When the boys arrived at the quarters of the army at Niagara they decided to remain a day or two, hoping to find some men who also might be planning to go on to the place where young Captain Perry was busily engaged in providing a fleet to protect the shores of Lake Erie.

In the interim, Hiram, who had been stationed at the post during the three months which he had served

in the army, showed his brother many of the places of interest in the vicinity. It was the first time that Amos had ever looked upon the great volume of waters that fell over the cliffs of Niagara. The roar that could be heard for miles, as well as the sight of the surging, tossing, rushing waters in the gorge were alike impressive to the lad.

His chief interest, however, was centered in the men who were preparing to repel the redcoats who were expected any time to approach from the opposite side of the roaring river.

On the third day when still no one had been found who was expecting to go to Presque Isle the brothers decided that they would delay no longer.

Accordingly early in the morning they set forth on the last stage of their long journey. Accustomed as they were to the woods, they had slight fear of losing their way. Indeed there were a few times when neglecting the more frequent pathway or road they advanced through the forest as no one who was not a skilled woodsman could have done. Steadily they kept to their task, becoming more interested in the work that lay before them, as they drew nearer the destination they were seeking. How many men had Captain Perry? What was he expecting to accomplish? Were there possibilities of an attack by the British? All these were problems interesting and for which as yet no solution was found by either of the boys. All that was in their minds was the thought

of the young Rhode Island captain who, with a little band of men, was doing his utmost to provide and equip a fleet with which to regain the control of Lake Erie which the surrender of Detroit by General Hull the preceding year had given the British.

At night the brothers had found a resting-place usually in a clump of cedars where they had spread their blankets as on many times before they had done when they had been on hunting expeditions. There was greater need of watchfulness against prowling wild beasts than against men dressed in red coats along the pathway they now were following.

"I think we shall make the place to-day," suggested Hiram on the third day after they had departed from Niagara.

"I shall be glad of it," responded Amos quickly.

"You may not be so glad," responded his brother dryly, "if what Gordon Hopkins says is true. I guess Captain Perry doesn't give his men very many holidays."

"I didn't come out here for holidays," said Amos promptly, nevertheless feeling somewhat chagrined as his brother laughed good-naturedly and made no response.

Their hasty meal was speedily prepared and they were about to resume their journey when Amos said quickly, "There's somebody coming."

Hiram instantly stepped back and listened intently and then in a low voice said, "Yes, there is somebody

coming. I guess whoever it is he must be coming from Niagara.”

The approaching stranger was whistling on his way as if thoughts of danger were not even present in his mind.

“Take your gun,” said Hiram in a low voice, “and go over there behind that oak. It may be just as well for you not to be seen unless there is a call for you. I don’t believe this fellow amounts to much, or he wouldn’t be whistling to let even the very birds know that he is coming. But I guess it will be just as well for me to find out who he is and what he has before he goes any further.”

It was not long before the stranger appeared. He discerned the presence of Hiram who at the same moment became aware that the man for whose coming he was waiting had appeared. Amos was peering out from behind his hiding place, and his expression of astonishment when he beheld the advancing man, was as great as that upon the face of his brother, Hiram.

## CHAPTER XVI

### IN THE MIDST OF ALARMS

“IT’S Sir Walter!” exclaimed Amos in a low voice.

“And there is somebody with him,” added Hiram in surprise.

“He ought to know enough not to come whistling through the woods when they are filled with Indians or redcoats,” exclaimed Amos.

“He has stopped now,” suggested Hiram as the sound of whistling abruptly ceased, and it became manifest that the approaching men were not yet aware who the boys were. They had discerned the forms as they advanced from the midst of the trees but they were still too far away to recognize who they were, while both Hiram and Amos had no difficulty from their point of vantage in recognizing the approaching strangers.

Before either of the boys had spoken to the approaching men both Sir Walter and his companion, who Amos thought was Simeon, stopped and stared intently about them. Suddenly they both darted into the woods at their right and disappeared from sight.

“What does that mean?” inquired Amos of his brother.

“It looks as if they had seen something or somebody,” whispered Hiram in reply.

Several minutes elapsed and not a sound disturbed the silence of the forest nor had either of the approaching men advanced. Where they had gone, or what had startled them, was not apparent. Their actions, however, had been of such a character that both boys surmised that danger was not far away.

Trembling with suspense, Amos waited for his brother to decide upon the proper course for them to follow. Both boys were still more alarmed when the report of a rifle was heard far away in the forest and to both of them it seemed that the startling sound was followed by a cry. Neither the shot nor the shout was repeated though the boys listened intently, and waited until at least a quarter of an hour had elapsed.

“We might as well go on,” suggested Hiram at last. “I don’t know what this means, but we’ll be just as safe to be on our way as we are waiting here in the forest. I—”

Hiram stopped abruptly as the sound of men running rapidly toward them was heard. The fallen branches snapped under the feet of the fleeing strangers and it was manifest that they were running at their utmost speed. And both boys were aware that the men were coming directly toward them.

A brief time only elapsed when out from the for-

est, running swiftly, Simeon and Sir Walter were seen approaching. The discovery of the two boys, who were seen at the same time by both men, instantly caused them to change their course and they ran eagerly to the place where the brothers were waiting. Breathing heavily and glancing frequently behind them as if they were in fear of pursuers the two men halted when they gained the place where the boys were standing.

“What is it?” demanded Hiram. “What is wrong?”

“Indians!” replied Sir Walter, glancing fearfully behind him as he spoke.

“How many?” asked Hiram in a low voice.

“I don’t know. The woods are full of them.”

“Were they following you?”

“Yes, and they were in front of us, too. I think they are trying to cut us off from Presque Isle.”

“Could you see who they were?”

“No,” replied Sir Walter. “They were Indians, and on the warpath too and that was enough for me.”

“If they are between us and Presque Isle we’ll have to leave the main trail if we get rid of them.”

“Yes,” said Sir Walter, “and run plumb into one of their bands.”

“What makes you think there are more than one band?”

“Because we have seen three different ones. First we saw some of them following us and didn’t pay

very much attention to them. Then we saw another band of twenty or more off on our right and when we left the trail and ran into the opposite direction we almost ran right into the arms of another band. They fired at us, too."

"We heard the shot," said Hiram, "and then we thought we heard somebody cry out."

"It was only a yell by the Indians. They were shooting at us and then let out a great whoop when they saw that we ran away from them."

"Probably they were letting some of the other bands know that you had gotten away from them," suggested Amos.

"What shall we do now?" inquired Simeon, who thus far had not taken any part in the conversation.

"Get away from here just as fast as we can," said Amos positively.

"Go on to Presque Isle?" inquired Simeon.

"We might just as well go in that direction as any other," answered Hiram.

"I'm sure they are trying to cut us off," said Sir Walter, "and in the night we shall run straight into their hands. How far is Presque Isle from here?"

"I think it must be about twenty miles," replied Hiram. "We have kept pretty close to the trail and I think we have covered all but about that distance."

"We can't make it before dark," suggested Simeon.

“That may be so,” acknowledged Hiram, “but every mile we go nearer our own men the less danger we shall be in. We’ll start now,” he added. “Every one of you look to the priming of his gun and see he is ready for whatever may happen.”

In Indian file the four then advanced along the trail, watchful of every sign and though they were moving rapidly they were all fearful of being shot at by some of their foes hidden among the trees or concealed in some ambushade.

Nor were the fears of the young soldiers without meaning. They had advanced only a few miles when Hiram, who was leading the way, abruptly stopped and pointed to some fresh imprints of moccasined feet in a muddy place near the trail. “Some of them,” he said in a whisper, “are ahead of us. They are there for no good purpose, either.”

“We cannot go back,” suggested Simeon.

“And we can’t go ahead,” said Amos, his excitement apparently greater than that of any of his companions.

“We must leave the trail,” said Hiram positively. “If we can only make the shore of Lake Erie we shall stand a chance of getting into Presque Isle. It’s almost our only chance, too.”

“Go ahead then,” said Sir Walter brusquely. “We don’t want to waste any time here.”

Immediately departing from the trail the band turned into the woods at their right and endeavored

to make their way noiselessly through the primeval forest. The fears of every one were strong. The great trunks might be hiding places for their foes and even the branches of the great beeches and oaks might afford a refuge for the dark-eyed warriors, who, they feared, had not lost sight of the white men even for a minute.

In the midst of such forebodings the young soldiers moved cautiously, keeping well together and Hiram leading the way, while Sir Walter, at his own request, marched as the rear guard.

In this manner they advanced a half-hour, covering as well as they could estimate about two miles of the distance which must be traversed. As yet no fresh signs of danger had appeared. The sun was sinking lower in the western sky and within two hours would disappear from sight. It would be impossible for the boys to cover the entire distance before night would be upon them, but to proceed in the darkness was too perilous to be considered for a moment.

The party now were climbing a small hill. At its very top a clump of cedars was growing, and when Hiram discovered this he instantly turned to his companions and said, "That's the place for us! We'll get up there and stay to-night and wait for the morning."

"But it won't be dark for a good while yet," suggested Simeon. "Why don't we keep on our way? If the redskins are trailing us they will be able to

find us before night and if they are not, we might as well be doing all in our power to get out of the forest."

Hiram shook his head, as he said, "We may never find another such spot as this. Nobody can go up the side of the mound without being seen and if the Indians are still following us they won't be likely to come up in the face of our guns."

"But they outnumber us," suggested Simeon; "ten to one, probably."

"More than that," suggested Sir Walter emphatically.

"I don't believe that will make any difference," said Hiram. "They know we are armed and it is not their way of fighting to come up a hill in the open and face any band that is armed, no matter how small it is. They will be more likely to try to work some trick on us than to fight us in the open."

Hiram's advice was followed and the entire band sought the top of the small hill behind which they discovered that within the cluster of cedars there was an open space which from its appearance might have been used as a hiding place by other parties.

"The first thing that we must do," said Hiram, as soon as all were within the enclosure, "is to have a guard. Two of us will have to keep watch all the while, one looking out on one side and the other on the other. We'll take turns at this, for a while anyway. Amos and I will go on duty first."

“What shall we do?” inquired Sir Walter. “We might keep watch, too.”

“There is no use in that,” answered Hiram positively. “We can’t have any fire, but if you have anything to eat you might get it ready for us.”

Hiram, who was the natural leader of the band, at once sought his station, lying prostrate on the ground and peering through the trees from whence he could see a considerable distance in that direction.

Amos followed his brother’s example, he too stretching himself on the ground on a place from which he would be able to behold the approach of their enemies.

Meanwhile, Sir Walter cut strips of jerked venison and then with some of the hard biscuit served every one his supper.

The hunger of the boys was keen in spite of their fear, and courage returned with the food. The scanty repast, however, had hardly been completed when a low warning was given by Amos.

Instantly Simeon and Sir Walter threw themselves on the ground beside their companion and peering in the direction which he silently indicated, they looked down into the little valley below them.

Moving silently was a band of red men. Some were stooping low and all of them running in the lope which many of the tribes used on the warpath or on hunting expeditions. The men plainly could be seen as every one passed across an open space between the trees at the foot of the hill.

"That's all," whispered Sir Walter at last, when apparently the entire band had disappeared.

"How many did you make?" inquired Simeon.

"Twenty-one."

"That's what I made it, too," said Amos. "Where do you suppose they have gone?"

"They have gone ahead of us for one thing," replied Sir Walter. "What I can't account for is that they didn't discover our tracks."

"It's a little dark now," suggested Amos. "They may have lost them. But they will come back as sure as you're born!"

Leaving Simeon on guard, his companions withdrew to the open space among the cedars and Amos summoned Hiram and briefly related to him what had just been seen.

"Keep up the watch," was Hiram's direction. "And there will be need to keep a good lookout on the side where I was, too."

Quickly retaking the place where he had been stationed and at the same time cautioning his friends to redouble their efforts on the opposite side of the mound, the watch was resumed.

A few minutes only had elapsed before Hiram discovered a band almost as large as the one which Amos had seen passing the mound on his side. The sight was startling, and confirmed the fears which were in Hiram's heart.

Once more a conference was held and it was speed-

ily decided that the attempt to gain the shore of Lake Erie by the way which Hiram had suggested must be abandoned. The Indians were on every side. And the out-look for reaching the haven where Captain Perry and his men were building the little fleet was dark.

The shades of approaching evening now were long and only the rim of the great sun could be seen as it hung below the tree-tops. The supreme fear in the minds of all was that the Indians would discover that the band which they evidently had been following had not advanced and that they would return to search for their hiding place.

“We won’t any of us go to sleep to-night,” said Hiram. “All four of us must keep watch. If one sees anything suspicious he must warn the rest of us before he shoots. It is going to be a close call, anyway, and if we ever get to Presque Isle we’ll remember this night.”

No one replied to the suggestion though each at once resumed the station assigned him as a lookout. The twilight deepened and the night came on and still no evidence of the presence of their enemies was discovered.

None of the boys was aware that the British general at last had yielded to the urgent pleadings of Tecumseh, who presumably had more than 1,500 of the red warriors at the British headquarters at Malden, and that they were no longer able to be re-

strained. The attack sometime before upon the Maumee Valley and upon Fort Meigs had been repulsed by the heroic action of young Major Croghan, who, directly contrary to the orders of General Harrison, had held the little Fort.

The young major, who was less than twenty-two years of age, had only one six-pounder to aid in the defense of the place. Rejecting the pleadings of the British who had sent messengers in the Fort begging for its surrender so that bloodshed might be avoided and the red men be prevented from the indiscriminate slaughter which all knew would follow a successful attack on the place, he had replied that "when the Fort should be taken there would be none left to massacre."

Around the Fort was a deep ditch, and in their confidence of speedily possessing themselves of the place, the redcoats and the red men had leaped into the ditch preparing to scale the walls. It was then that young Major Croghan turned "Good Bess," the name of his six-pound cannon, upon the struggling mass of men in the ditch and a frightful slaughter followed.

Although the British were not ready to abandon the attack, their red allies fled with shouts and cries to the shelter of the adjacent forests; but the rifles of the few defenders and the activity of "Good Bess" prevented the taking of the Fort, and the bold young commander soon was permitted to send a message

of his success to General Harrison, who was in command of the Western Army.

But Tecumseh's followers, as well as many of the followers of General Proctor, were determined to atone for the disaster. At last a second attack was planned and preliminary to this undertaking many of Tecumseh's warriors were let loose in the region. Some of them planned to intercept men who were advancing from the south, while others were to attempt to cut off any additions to Perry's little force at Presque Isle.

But Hiram Proper and his friends on that June night in 1813 when they were in the shelter of the cedar trees on the top of the little mound, only a few miles from Lake Erie, were not aware of any of these things, and consequently were in ignorance also of the cause of the presence of the warriors in the woods.

## CHAPTER XVII

### PURSUED

THE evening advanced and the careful watch was unbroken. An occasional call of a night-bird or the snapping of a branch under the footfall of some prowling beast were the only sounds that were heard. The light of the stars in a measure enabled the anxious young soldier to see a short distance into the surrounding forest, but even the forms of passing men would have been difficult to distinguish from the trunks of the tall trees.

Apparently their enemies either had withdrawn or were waiting until a more suitable time before they made their attack. The custom of the red men of beginning their attacks just before dawn was known to the four watchers, but the knowledge did not interfere with the careful guard that was maintained.

Occasionally Hiram withdrew from his post to consult with his companions and learn whether or not any sign of danger had been seen by them. Each time he returned to his position without any further knowledge of the conditions that surrounded them.

At last midnight arrived. Summoning his friends

once more, Hiram held a whispered conversation in the center of the open place among the cedars.

"Do you think they have gone on?" inquired Simeon.

Hiram shook his head as he replied, "They saw our footprints as plainly as we can see the stars. They haven't left us and they know where we are."

"How will it do for us to try to get away in the darkness?" inquired Sir Walter.

"It won't do at all," replied Hiram positively. "They outnumber us ten to one, anyway. Some of them now are right near the base of the hill, I am sure."

"Can't we make our way through them?" inquired Amos.

"Not all of us. If we should make a rush together some of us would be hit and probably every one. If we went one by one, perhaps some of us might get away, but that is a question."

"What can we do, then?" inquired Simeon seriously.

"I don't know," answered Hiram. "Perhaps we'll know more when morning comes."

"We'll know more of what we don't want to know," suggested Sir Walter. "I have a plan to suggest, and I think it is the only one we can try."

"What is it?" asked Hiram.

"It is for one of us to try to make his way to

Presque Isle and get a detachment to come out here to rescue the rest of us—who will stay here.”

“I am not sure,” said Hiram thoughtfully, “but that suggestion is the best. I have thought of something of the kind myself. It may be that I shall succeed in making my way through the woods. If I don’t, you will know it by to-morrow night.”

“What are you talking about?” demanded Sir Walter sharply. “Do you think you are the only one who can get through the lines of these redskins?”

“I don’t know that I do,” replied Hiram. “I hadn’t thought of any one else going.”

“Well, think of it now!” retorted Sir Walter. “We’re going to settle that thing in the right way.”

“How is that?”

“We’ll draw lots for it.”

“All right,” assented Hiram. “You fix your straws and we’ll all draw. Whoever goes ought to start from here before sunrise.”

In the dim light Sir Walter selected four spears of grass which he cut into different lengths. These he arranged between the palms of his hands and then turning once more to his companions said, “Which shall it be—the longest or the shortest straw?”

“The shortest,” answered Hiram promptly. “I’ll draw first.” As he spoke he selected one of the straws in Sir Walter’s hands and his example was followed in order by Amos and Simeon, Sir Walter retaining the one which was left. Comparing the

straws a moment later Amos in a low voice said, "I have the shortest, and I'm the one to go."

"No," said Hiram quickly. "You are to stay here and I shall go."

"No, sir," declared Amos promptly. "I drew the lot and I am going to do my part. Besides, who knows that I'll not be a good deal safer in the woods than I would be if I stayed here cooped up on the top of this mound."

Hiram made no further protest and all four resumed their watch.

Several hours elapsed before Hiram sought his young brother and said to him earnestly, "Amos, if you are going, it is time for you to start."

"All right," replied Amos. "I am going and am ready to start at any time."

"I'm not afraid of your losing your way," continued Hiram. "What you'll have to look out for most is being followed by some of these redskins. Keep as straight a course as you can for the lake. It may be that you will find a brook and you can follow its course all the way. Usually there are bushes growing along the banks of the little stream and they will give you places where you can hide. I don't know what your mother would say if she knew I was letting you go alone."

"She'd say less than she would if both of us were going. Somebody will have to go, and it might as well be Amos Proper as any one."

No further words were spoken and in a brief time, Amos, having bidden his companions good-bye and shaken the hand of each, cautiously withdrew from the cedars and moving slowly made his way safely to the base of the little hill, where in a moment he was lost to sight in the darkness of the surrounding forest.

Halting long enough to convince himself that no one was near, Amos cautiously and carefully moved forward on his way. In the dim light he was aware that he had crossed the main trail. Beyond, there was only the pathless forest. All about him were the great trees with their shadows and their perils. Any treetop might be the hiding place of a treacherous foe; any bush might conceal a painted savage.

At frequent intervals the boy stopped to listen and to look intently about him. At times he moved swiftly on his way. When the dawn appeared, he estimated that he must have covered two miles at least and as he had not yet obtained a glimpse of his enemies, his heart became lighter.

He believed that the first of his perils had been safely passed, but the greater danger was still to be met, when he should come nearer to the main body that was stationed at Presque Isle. Doubtless the red men now were near the little place, watchful of conditions there and ready to report by runner to their leaders if anything of unusual interest occurred. Convinced that for a time at least he might

proceed with a measure of safety, Amos ran swiftly forward, sometimes leaping over the fallen branches, or compelled to push his way through the thick underbrush that like a wall disputed his passage.

The May sun had climbed high in the heavens and the heat of the day increased. The young soldier had quenched his thirst at a spring he found on a little hillside, but he was hungry now. There was no time however to satisfy his craving, though with his knife he cut strips from the piece of jerked beef he was carrying, and ate as he ran.

Suddenly he discovered before him a band of a half-dozen Indian braves. In the one quick glance he gave, he saw the hideous stripes and splashes of red and yellow on their faces, which indicated only too clearly the purpose for which the warriors were advancing. Whether or not he had been seen he did not know.

The Indians were not more than twenty yards in advance of him and apparently were moving in the same direction in which he was going. They were all armed and he was aware that if his presence was known, a fight for life must follow.

Instantly Amos had darted to one side, striving to make his way noiselessly through the tangled brush and among the tall trees. He was fearful that the sound of his footfalls might have been heard and a moment later he was convinced that they had been, for there was a loud yell behind him that showed only too plainly that the red men had discovered his pres-

ence on the trail and had turned in swift pursuit of the stranger. The time for caution was now gone, and Amos Proper broke into his swiftest paces. On and on, leaping over the fallen trees, almost heedless of his direction, the lad ran, hoping that he might be able to distance his pursuers. It was true he might lose his way, but it was better to lose that than his life at the hands of the merciless savages.

Not many minutes had elapsed, however, before his ears were saluted by a whoop and he heard a musket ball "sing" uncomfortably close to his head.

Instantly changing the direction in which he was running, Amos headed back toward the trail, hoping to gain it at a point in advance of the place where the Indians probably had abandoned it. In that clearer pathway he might be able to make such speed as he could not hope to make in the tangled brush of the forest. His body was trembling and great drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead, as he endeavored still more to increase his speed.

A groan escaped the young soldier's lips when, as he drew near the trail, his ears were again saluted by a whoop, and he was aware that the savages had guarded against the very attempt he was trying to make by stationing some of their number along the trail to thwart his scheme.

The shots increased and the cries became fiercer as young Amos Proper again quickly changed his direction and once more turned back into the forest.

Swift as was his pace, that of the pursuing Indians seemed to be still swifter. The cries were heard on almost every side and every fresh whoop sounded like a knell in the ears of the desperate boy. He came to the border of a stream and without hesitating a moment leaped in, holding his rifle about his head and hoping that his pursuers might hesitate to follow him into the water. Soon after he gained the bank he was conscious that the cries had redoubled and he was aware also that the chase was even keener than it had been.

A moment later he came into a little opening and as he darted across it several shots rang out. Amos felt a stinging, burning sensation in his left arm, but there was neither faltering nor stopping.

On and still on ran pursued and pursuers. Again several shots rang out behind him and once more the lad was aware that he had been wounded, but just where he could not determine. The wild cries apparently were on all sides, but now he was only partly aware of their terrible meaning. There was a ringing in his ears, but he still fled on. Life and safety for himself and for the friends he had left in the early dawn depended upon his efforts. There must be no faltering at the last! The race for life must be won!

Only partly aware of the direction in which he had been running, Amos was ignorant of the region in which he now found himself after an hour had elapsed.



AGAIN SEVERAL SHOTS RANG OUT BEHIND HIM.—Page 220.



That he had not been overtaken seemed to the suffering boy almost incredible. For some time the cries of his pursuers had not been heard, but uncertain whether this was due to their having abandoned their pursuit, or to the fact that they were saving their breath for the final race, he could not determine. Weary though he was, he did not think of stopping. His sole hope of safety lay in the possibility of his obtaining help from the garrison on the shore of Lake Erie.

But even rugged Amos Proper was unable to continue his flight much farther. Wild-eyed and blood-stained, and with a pain in his side that was almost unbearable, the lad looked about him for some place of refuge.

Not far away he suddenly discovered the stream which several miles back he had seen before. Running to its bank he leaped into the water and stumbling, almost falling, and yet somehow contriving to keep on his way, he ran a hundred feet or more in the shallow waters, unconsciously following the current as he did so.

The stream here became wider, and about twenty feet from the shore was an island perhaps forty feet long and fifteen wide and covered with brush. The sight suggested to the desperate boy a hiding-place, and instantly he turned toward the shore. He was surprised when he discovered that he was able to wade the entire distance, and in a few minutes he almost

fell forward as he gained the bank and halted under the shelter of the bushes that grew near the border of the island.

Closing his eyes and almost indifferent now to any result that might follow his efforts, the suffering boy lay still for several minutes. Restored in a measure by the rest he had been able to take, Amos then crawled on his hands and knees a little farther up the bank to a place where he would be able to see what might be passing on the main shore, without unduly exposing himself. Successful in his attempt he parted the bushes and carefully looked first up and then down the shore of the stream.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ON THE SHORE OF LAKE ERIE

SCARCELY conscious of the passing time and of his suffering, Amos Proper remained in his hiding place until at last he became aware that the object of his flight would be lost unless some action was taken speedily. How much time had elapsed since he had departed from the place where he had left his brother and his companions, he did not know. He glanced at the sun and concluded that it must be near the hour of noon. Crawling painfully to the borders of the stream he drank from the swiftly flowing water until his thirst was quenched and then he resumed his place behind the bushes.

A long time had elapsed since he had seen any of his enemies and yet Amos was so familiar with the ways of the red men that it was impossible for him to believe that they really had departed. And yet what could he do? He still had the rifle which he had brought from the camp, and almost unconsciously looked to its priming, but he was unaware of the distance to the lake shore and was confident that some, at least, of his enemies were still prowling about in the

vicinity. The Indian warriors did not readily retire from a place to which they once had laid siege.

Fearful that harm might befall his brother and aware also that what he did must be done quickly, Amos at last decided to venture once more from his place of shelter. A final glance was given up and down the stream, which failed to disclose the presence of any of his enemies, and then the boy slowly made his way to the opposite side of the island. Here he was rejoiced when he found that the water was still shallow and that the distance to the mainland was not more than five or six yards. Delaying no longer, he plunged once more into the stream, gained the bank he was seeking and then summoning all his strength began to run along the bank, following the direction of the stream.

In spite of the pain he suffered he was convinced that the two wounds he had received were not serious. One bullet had grazed his arm and though the wound had bled freely it was not deep. The other had passed through his jacket above his shoulder, but as he still was able to move his arm freely he was not fearful of evil results. The sense of his brother's danger now returned with full force and Amos's speed increased as he ran forward. It was not unlikely that some of his foes might have crossed the stream and were waiting for him further down, but as he had not yet seen any of them, he plunged forward running swiftly and stopping only occasionally

to look about him, or to make sure of what was behind.

How far he had gone, he did not know, when at last he saw before him the blue waters of Lake Erie. Running swiftly to the shore he looked about in all directions for the presence of friends. In which direction was Presque Isle? Should he turn to his right, or should he go to the left? Unfamiliar as Amos was with the entire region, he was in a quandary. To proceed in the wrong direction now would lead him further away from the place where help was to be found, and might also take him into greater and unknown perils.

At last the boy decided to cross the mouth of the stream, which, as far as he could see, was still shallow. Instantly advancing into the water he was rejoiced when he found that he had no difficulty in wading to the opposite shore. The waters in places were somewhat noisy and there were certain swift currents where the stream dashed over slippery stones. Several times the eager boy nearly lost his balance and almost fell into the water, but each time he recovered himself and plunged forward.

Without hesitating he ran swiftly along the shore as soon as he gained the desired bank, still driven by a sense of the fresh peril of going in the wrong direction. In most places the shore of the lake was sandy and wide so that he was running at a distance of fifteen yards or more from the trees that were

growing on the sloping sides. As yet there had been no indication that he was seen or was being followed, but now his anxiety provided an incentive for speed greater even than his own fear. On and on the boy ran until at last he stopped abruptly when not far in advance of him he discovered a band of men. A hasty glance at once revealed the fact that they were white men and instantly he concluded he must be near the place he was seeking.

With a shout Amos advanced and as he came nearer he was aware that the men had discovered his approach and were curiously watching him. He saw that there were at least ten in the band and though they were armed they did not appear to be hostile.

Amos's appearance as he stumbled into the midst of the men was somewhat startling. His face and hands were blood-stained, while the dirt and streams of perspiration had made strange markings on his countenance.

"Where is Presque Isle?" he asked breathlessly.

"What do you want of that place? Who are you?" demanded one of the young men in the band.

"I want help!" replied Amos. "I left three men back on the trail and there is a band of Indians which has surrounded them. If they don't get help right away they will be scalped, every one of them!"

"Who are the men?" demanded the leader as his companions crowded about the boy in their interest.

"They are three men coming to join Captain Perry's force," explained Amos.

"How many Indians are there?"

"I don't know exactly," responded Amos, "but there must be twenty-five or thirty, anyway."

"I am afraid nothing will save the men then," replied the leader, shaking his head.

"But they must be saved! One of them is my brother, Hiram! They sent me on to get help!"

"Come with me," said the young soldier, "and we'll see what can be done."

Instantly obeying, Amos followed the young man along the winding shore until at last he found himself on the beach of a broad bay. Before him he could see the vessels which Captain Perry's men had been building. He had arrived at last at Presque Isle! Interest in his surroundings, however, for the time was forgotten, as he painfully followed the man who was conducting him toward the quarters of the men.

"Stay here until I come back," said the soldier sharply, as he turned to a band of his companions, just returning from the stocks.

Amos saw that he held a hasty conversation with the men and as they all soon ran from the place he concluded the message they had received had produced an immediate effect.

Meanwhile the soldier returned to Amos and said, "Now tell me exactly where the place is."

"I will do the best I can," replied Amos. "It must be eighteen or twenty miles from here, and is on the main trail. It is a little hill or a big mound, whichever you want to call it. There are some cedar trees growing on the top and a noisy brook runs along one side at the base. There aren't any trees very near it and it stands out all alone."

"I guess I know the spot," said the other man quickly. "It's a place where some of the Indian tribes along the lake have buried their dead for no one knows how many generations."

"Maybe that was the reason why the Indians didn't attack us last night," suggested Amos.

"Probably that was one of the reasons," said the man. "Now if your brother and his friends can stave off an attack to-night, we may be able to get them out of the place before morning. It all depends on who the redskins were and what they were doing. Why," he added suddenly, "you look as if you yourself had been hit!"

"I guess I was," said Amos, "but I couldn't have been hit very hard because I kept on without stopping except for a little while on an island I found in a big creek up the shore."

"Yes, I know the place. You come with me, and I will see what can be done for you."

"But I'm going back with you," replied Amos.

"You'll stay here," said the man quickly; and the lad realized there was nothing more to be said.

Amos followed his new friend and was conducted by him into the presence of the surgeon who at once began an investigation. When at last Amos was released, after having been informed that he would be all right again in a few days, he was also told by one of the men that had met him on the bank that a band of twenty men already had departed for the rescue of the little party.

"What is your name?" demanded the stranger abruptly.

"Amos Proper."

"Did you come here to join one of the captain's crews?"

"Yes, that is, I came to join Captain Perry's force, and my brother and the other men were coming, too."

"We need every man we can get! Captain Perry has been sending couriers to Commodore Chauncey almost every day for the past two weeks begging for men. The fleet is almost ready."

"Yes!" said Amos in surprise. "I see it is," he added, as he glanced at the boats, some of which already were floating on the waters. Only a few at this time still remained on the stocks.

"My name," said the stranger, "is John Corneck."

"Do you come from Rhode Island?" inquired Amos with a smile.

"How did you know that?" demanded the man in surprise.

"Oh, I just guessed it. Some of the men here I

know are from that State. Do you know Gordon Hopkins?"

"Indeed I do," replied the man promptly. "He's here now."

"Where is he?" asked Amos eagerly.

"You'll find him at work on the *Lawrence* along with a good many other good men."

"I brought some papers from Niagara," explained Amos as he drew a letter from his pocket. "They will tell who I am and what I am to do."

"I guess the captain will explain all that," laughed John. Although he was only a few years older than Amos, he assumed the manner of one who had had long experience. "I will go with you now," he added. "We'll find some quarters for you so that you'll know when you're at home."

As they advanced John began to sing,—

"Long the tyrant of our coast,  
Reigned the famous *Guerriere*:  
Our little navy she defied  
Public ship and privateer:  
On her sails, in letters red  
To our captains were displayed  
Words of warning, words of dread:  
'All who meet me have a care,  
I am England's *Guerriere*.'"

"That's very good," said Amos.

"Of course," replied John. "Then here's another one,"—

“‘Clear ship for action!’ sounds the boatswain’s call;  
‘Clear ships for action!’ his three mimics bawl.  
Swift round the deck see war’s dread weapons hurled  
And floating ruins strew the watery world.  
‘All hands to quarters’ fore and aft resounds,  
Thrills from the fife and from the drum-head bounds.  
From crowded hatchways, scores on scores arise,  
Spring up the shrouds, and vault into the skies.  
Firm at his quarters each bold gunner stands,  
The death-fraught lightning flashes from his hands.

“‘Haven’t you heard those songs about Captain Hull?’” abruptly asked the singer.

“Do you mean William Hull?” inquired Amos.

“I know a song, it begins,—

“Let William Hull be counted null,  
A coward and a traitor;  
His army sold for British gold  
To Brock, the speculator.”—

“Oh, that is another Hull entirely,” broke in John.  
“I am singing about Captain Isaac Hull. You know he was in command of the *Constitution* last year when she captured the *Guerriere*. That was a great fight, boy, and I guess if our boats can win on the ocean, they can win on Lake Erie, too! We’ll have a chance to try too pretty soon because the British fleet has been laying off and on outside the harbor for a good many days. Did you ever hear how Captain Isaac Hull got so excited when the fight began that he split his tight breeches from the waistband to the knee? He was one of the fattest men I ever saw and

he always insisted upon wearing tight breeches. When the *Guerriere* opened fire Lieutenant Morris, who was second in command to Hull, came up to the captain and asked permission to open fire. 'Not yet,' said Captain Hull. Nearer and nearer still the two vessels came together and then Lieutenant Morris asked again for permission to fire. 'Not yet,' said Captain Hull as calmly as if he had been talking in some home. By and by when the *Constitution* reached just the place he wanted Captain Hull all at once was full of excitement and twice bending over he yelled: 'Now, boys, pour it into them!' The *Constitution* opened her forward guns,—they were double shotted with round and grape,—with awful effect. Both boats were hidden in the smoke and perhaps it was just as well, for when Captain Isaac stood up he found that he had had the accident I told you about."

"Did he stop to change his clothes?" laughed Amos.

Looking sharply into his companion's face, John replied, "I guess you don't know much about Isaac Hull, or you wouldn't ask that question. In a few minutes the *Guerriere's* mizzenmast was shot away and the cabin of the *Constitution* was on fire, and there were guns sounding on every side. The British piped, 'All hands below,' and got ready to close in or board. So did our men. Just then the *Constitution* caught a little breeze and fell away a short dis-

tance, and that gave her time to look after her own masts. They rove the rigging and, just before the sun set, the old frigate wheeled around and got just the position she wanted for raking the wreck of the *Guerriere*. There wasn't anything left after that, and the *Guerriere* was Captain Isaac Hull's prize. Captain Dacres, who was in command of the *Guerriere*, didn't want to own up that he had lowered his flag, but he thought better after a minute and owned up that he had. When Captain Hull asked him if he didn't need a surgeon, or want the *Constitution's* surgeon to help his wounded, he said, 'I should suppose you had on board your own ship business enough for all your medical officers.' Then Lieutenant Read, who had been sent to take charge of the *Guerriere* spoke up. 'Oh, no, we have only seven wounded and they were dressed last night.' " John once more began to sing,—

"Isaac did so maul and rake her,  
That the decks of Captain Dacres  
Were in such a woeful pickle,  
As if Death, with scythe and sickle,  
With his sling or with his shaft  
Had cut his harvest fore and aft.  
Thus, in thirty minutes ended  
Mischiefs that could not be mended;  
Masts and yards, and ship descended  
All to David Jones's locker—  
Such a ship in such a pucker!"

## CHAPTER XIX

### SCOUTING

AMOS'S condition was such that he was prevented from immediately entering upon the work for which he had come. His wounded arm was carried in a sling, and there were other indications of the terrible experience through which he had passed.

As the day drew to a close he was eagerly awaiting the return of the band which had been sent for the rescue of Hiram and his friends. The night, however, drew on and the men had not yet come.

It was nearly noon the following day when the rescuing party returned to Presque Isle and when Amos was aware of their presence he ran eagerly to the place where they were to be seen, surrounded by their friends. To his dismay he did not see Hiram among the men, neither was either of the other of his recent companions there! Startled and alarmed by the sight, as soon as he was able to do so he sought out the leader of the expedition and said to him, "Didn't you find my brother?"

"No," replied the man gruffly. "There wasn't a soul in the place where you said they were shut in by the redskins. We didn't see an Indian either all

the way going and coming. It is my opinion, young man, you sent us on a wild goose chase."

"Perhaps you didn't find the right place?" suggested Amos scarcely aware of the implied reproach in the man's words so anxious was he concerning the safety of Hiram. What could have happened? Did the besieging Indians succeed in taking the men away from them? It was strange, too, that no sign of the presence of the red men had been discovered by the band, which had been sent for the relief of Hiram and his comrades.

"How far did you go?" inquired Amos.

"Twice as far as we ought to have gone," retorted the man almost angrily. "We might better have stayed here and kept up our work on the fleet. If I thought you—"

"Does this look like it?" broke in Amos quickly as he pointed to the arm which he was carrying in a sling.

"Maybe not," said the man slightly mollified by the evident sincerity of the boy; but he added, "you may have been scared a good deal more than you had a right to be."

"But we saw two bands of Indians, and there must have been twenty in each of them," protested Amos. "We kept guard all night and we all wondered why they didn't attack us. Now you say that it was a burying-place. That may be the reason why we were left alone. Are you sure you cannot find them?"

“Of course I am sure. I ought to know it if anybody does. We have tramped through the woods and kept on the lookout for the redskins, but we didn’t even find a white man for all our troubles.”

“But where do you suppose my brother and the other men are?”

“I haven’t the least idea,” retorted the man a little more sympathetic as he saw the manifest distress of Amos. “They may have slipped out just as you did. If one boy can make his way to Presque Isle, I guess the others can, too. I shouldn’t worry about it. They may have taken the wrong trail. If they did, it may be a day or two before they find it out. Take it easy for a while and let the other fellow do the worrying.”

Amos said no more, but the following day found him anxiously watching the opening in the forest where Hiram and the others would be likely first to appear.

Meanwhile although he was unable to take any share in the work, Amos was deeply interested in the labors of the men and the fleet which they were building.

There were two brigs—the *Lawrence*, named by the Secretary of the Navy in honor of the gallant captain of the *Chesapeake*—and the other, the *Niagara*. In addition, there was a clipper schooner, the *Ariel*, and several sloops, the chief of which were the *Porcupine* and the *Tigress*.

Several of these vessels were nearly completed, as we know, and the work upon the other boats was progressing as rapidly as possible under the discouraging conditions that prevailed at Presque Isle.

Captain Perry himself was ill, and the two doctors in the force had also about one-fifth of the entire number in their improvised hospitals. Besides these discouraging facts, there were others which must have increased the distress and anxiety of the energetic young commander.

The Government at Washington failing to provide the captain with sufficient men to man his fleet, at the same time was calling loudly upon him to coöperate with General Harrison, who was in command, as we know, of the Western Army. Indeed, within the space of four days, two couriers arrived who had been sent by the Secretary of the Treasury with positive orders for the fleet on Lake Erie to enter at once into plans with General Harrison for active work. There is slight cause for surprise that the name of this Secretary was not popular among many of the soldiers in the War of 1812! At the same time General Harrison was sending messengers to Presque Isle and describing the dire perils of his little army and his pressing need of help.

As if to make matters still worse, almost at the same time, word was received that a new and powerful vessel, to be called the *Detroit*, was being built at Malden and now was almost ready to serve in the

British fleet. Perhaps none of these things had a more depressing effect upon the little force at Presque Isle than the report which was sent that Captain Robert H. Barclay, who had served with Admiral Nelson at Trafalgar, had arrived at Malden and had brought with him many men and officers who had had experience under the great British Admiral.

When it was said that Captain Barclay was to be the commander of the British fleet on Lake Erie the fears of the inexperienced Yankees were not allayed. Two hundred soldiers, who had been sent from Buffalo had been ordered to return. Indeed, when Perry's fleet at last was ready for action he had only about three hundred officers and men at Presque Isle to command two twenty-gun brigs and eight smaller vessels. Many of the number were negroes, and many were boys not much older than Amos Proper.

Replying to General Harrison's appeals for help Captain Perry explained his own inability to do much because of his lack of men.

This message soon afterward brought a sharp letter from the Secretary of the Navy, who rebuked the young commander sharply for thus "exposing his weakness."

When Captain Perry wrote to Commodore Chauncey, complaining not only of the small number of men sent him but also stating that they were an inferior lot,—“a motley set,—blacks, soldiers and

boys,"—he received in reply from the half-sick, nervous Commodore, such a letter that Captain Perry promptly asked for his removal from the station because he "could not serve longer under an officer who had been so totally regardless of his feelings."

Commodore Chauncey, however, who was really a brave and true man, at once wrote a friendly letter to Captain Perry in which he generously withdrew the bitter words he had written and at once appealed to the manly spirit of the energetic young captain. Friendly relations were quickly restored between the captain on Lake Erie and the commodore on Lake Ontario.

Amos Proper speedily made aware by his new comrades of the condition which had arisen, was more seriously troubled by the continued failure of his brother and his companions to arrive at Presque Isle. When three days had elapsed and still no word of the missing men was received his fears still more increased. Not a courier entering the post brought word of having seen or heard anything concerning the missing band. Indeed there were some who were inclined to question openly whether Amos had really seen any prowling Indians or had not been deceived by his own fears. However probable such declarations might be, they none of them could explain the wounds which the lad had received. Neither had they accounted for the interview which he had held

with Hiram, that had resulted in the drawing of the lots and the selection of the youngest to try to make his way to Presque Isle to secure help for his three companions, who had been left behind.

The days slipped away and two weeks had now gone and still Hiram Proper and his two comrades had not come. What had become of them was chiefly a matter of conjecture, but many of those who were familiar with Amos's story still believed they had been lost in the great forest. Such an explanation, however, did not satisfy Amos, who was convinced that his brother's long experience in the woods had been such that it would be impossible for him to be lost. Aware of the experiences through which he himself had passed Amos was more fearful of an evil fate having befallen the three men from the prowling Indians. Although they might not have attacked the party hidden among the cedars on the top of the mound, still if the place really was what some had declared it to be (the burial place of some of the Indian tribes), doubtless their resentment against the young soldiers, who had intruded in such a sacred spot, would make them still more relentless in their determination to find them. It was more than probable, thought Amos, that Hiram, Sir Walter, and Simeon either had been taken away captives by the Indian warriors, or already had fallen victims to their anger. Slight comfort was to be had from either solution of the distressing problem, but Amos Proper, as

soon as he was able to engage in the work for which he had come, entered into the labors of the men at Presque Isle.

Gordon Hopkins, who now was one of the leading spirits of the post, was Amos's warmest friend. His selection for tasks not quite so difficult as some of the older men were compelled to undertake was doubtless due to the friendly word of the young Rhode Islander.

When a few days had elapsed Amos was greatly pleased to find that he was to move from the quarters he occupied and become a member of the same mess to which Gordon belonged, and later they were working side by side; and finally there came a day when to Amos's great delight Gordon said to him, "You and I are to take a sharpie and cruise off and on, off the bay."

Gordon did not explain the purpose for which he and the lad were to be sent on the voyage and it did not occur to Amos to inquire. He was delighted to have even the brief respite from the hard labor, and the prospect of a sail on Lake Erie of itself was too good to allow him to delay for any questions.

Accordingly, the following day, soon after sunrise, in a fleet little sharpie, Gordon and Amos sailed out from the harbor of Presque Isle toward the open Lake.

"See how shallow the water is here!" exclaimed Amos in surprise as he glanced over the rail of the

fleet little craft. "Why it looks almost as if one might wade ashore."

"It is shallow in most places," said Gordon.

"Is there a channel?"

"There is what they call a channel," laughed Gordon.

"How in the world will they ever get this fleet out of the harbor then? Here's a long bar," added Amos as he once more glanced over the side of the boat. "It looks as if it extended almost all the way across the bay."

"It does 'almost,' but not quite," exclaimed Gordon. "I guess it will be something of a job to get the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* out into the open lake."

"Where are we going?" inquired Amos.

"Nowhere in particular," laughed Gordon.

"What are we out here for?"

"Don't you want to be here?"

"Of course, I do. It's great fun," replied Amos as a fresh puff of wind sent the little boat's rail almost under.

"Well, then why don't you take the hours as they come?"

"I am taking them," laughed Amos. "Still I should like to know what we are here for."

"It may be for nothing at all," suggested Gordon.

Amos shook his head as he said, "Why don't you tell me?"

"You know almost as much as I," responded Gordon. "I think we have been sent out here to see what we can see."

"What?" demanded Amos abruptly turning about and facing his companion.

"That's it," said Gordon.

"Do they think the British fleet is off here?"

"They will know more about that when we get back," replied Gordon sagely.

"But that's what we're here to look for?"

"You can draw your own conclusions as well as I can draw mine. Meanwhile keep your eyes open and if you want to I will let you take your turn at the tiller. We don't want to get more than two or three miles out from the shore."

"What shall we do if we happen to see the British fleet?"

"Put straight back to the dock."

"If we can make it," suggested Amos.

"Look yonder!" suddenly exclaimed Gordon pointing northward across the lake as he spoke. Instantly both young sailors were gazing in the direction indicated and what they saw in the distance confirmed the fears of both.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE DISTANT SAIL

FAR away on the horizon a fleet of a half-dozen or more sails was seen. For a moment both of the boys were silent, as they gazed in consternation at the startling sight.

"How many do you make?" inquired Gordon in a low voice.

"Six," replied Amos once more counting aloud the boats he could distinguish in the distance. "What is it?" he added in a still lower voice.

"It is the British Fleet!" answered Gordon. "There isn't any question about it."

"Do you think they are going to attack Presque Isle now?"

"I don't believe they are out here for a picnic," replied Gordon tartly.

"Then the thing for us to do is to put straight back for the harbor and bring word that we have sighted the fleet."

"They can't get into the harbor, any of them," answered Gordon, "and I think we would better wait and make sure before we go back with our word."

"Why can't they get into the harbor?"

"Because there is a long sand-bar there that runs almost across from one side to the other. Unless they know the channel they will never be able to get inside and while they are trying to find the way I guess the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* now are far enough along to have something to say about it."

"It's plain enough," said Amos a few minutes later, "that the fleet is coming this way."

"Yes," absently answered Gordon, without turning his glance away from the sails that now had risen above the horizon and plainly were rapidly drawing near.

"Why don't we take word to Captain Perry? That's what I can't understand. How far are we out from the shore? It must be four miles, anyway."

"About that I should think. They will sight the fleet from the lookout possibly as soon as we do."

"Then what was the use in sending us out here?"

"So that we can see further than they can," grimly answered Gordon, as he lifted the glasses again to his eyes and looked long and carefully at the vessels in the distance.

"I think we ought to go back with our message," exclaimed Amos impatiently, as his companion seemed to show no disposition to come about.

"We'll go directly," said Gordon. He sat with the tiller held between his legs while the little craft sped forward, it's skipper still watching through his

glasses the fleet of the enemy. "I want to get a little better view of those fellows," he added, "before we run back. We can make almost as good time as they can running before the wind and we may have something more to report. Look yonder!" he exclaimed suddenly as he pointed to a tiny sail far away to their right.

"What's that?" asked Amos excitedly.

"That's Jack Dobbin. He went out on the other side of the harbor to keep watch there just as we have been doing this side."

"He's making good time back."

"Yes; and we won't have to run in quite so soon just because he is taking the word. We'll stay out here a little longer and watch these fellows before we go back. Are you afraid?"

"Not very much," answered Amos making a wry face as he spoke.

"You needn't be," said Gordon confidently. "We'll run in before those fellows can get anywhere near us and besides they won't pay any attention to such small fry as we are, anyway."

"Hasn't Captain Perry been afraid that Barclay would attack him at Presque Isle before he could get his fleet out of the harbor?"

"I guess he has,—some," answered Gordon soberly. "That is the reason why he built what he calls Wayne's Block House on one side of the harbor and put up the other block house on the other."

“The harbor itself,” suggested Amos, “must be five miles from the lake, isn’t it?”

“Just about. I think it’s about time for us to run in,” Gordon added, after taking another long look through his glasses when he saw that the fleet was swiftly approaching.

The wind was strong and came directly across the lake, favoring the approaching fleet as it did also the little catboat when both were headed in the same direction.

Amos, who only occasionally had been permitted to look through the long glasses was now gazing almost fascinated at the swiftly approaching sails. There was a fascination in the sight even if the vessels belonged to the enemy.

The clear sunlight, reflected as it was from the blue waters of Lake Erie, lent a tint of color to the white caps that now were to be seen on the waves. The wind was becoming stronger and the little boat in which the two observers were sailing was beginning to toss more wildly. When Gordon declared that it was time to run for the harbor the mind of the younger boy was greatly relieved and he turned quickly to lend a hand to his more experienced companion.

In a brief time the boat was running before the wind, on its way back toward the shelter of the long sandy peninsulas that shut in the mouth of Cascade Creek and helped in forming the harbor of Presque Isle. Their little boat was now almost at the mouth

of the stream and in a brief time would enter the harbor and its crew carry the word of the approaching fleet which doubtless had already been discovered by the watchers in one of the Block Houses.

The exhilaration of the swiftly moving sharpie, the thought of the enemy's boats not far away and the possibility of an attack upon the uncompleted American fleet in the harbor of Presque Isle, all were alike sources of excitement to the two young sailors.

"Where did they get the name,—Presque Isle? What is it, anyway?" asked Amos.

"Why, it's one of the chain of forts which the Frenchmen built all the way from Quebec down to the Mississippi and then down the river to New Orleans."

"Who built it?"

"Jean Cœur, though almost everybody calls him 'Joncire.' "

"Who was he?"

"Oh, one of the big Indian agents of the French Governor-General of Canada. The Frenchmen had planned to make this fort the place where all the supplies for the inland fleet might be landed, but when the English whipped the French and took Canada away from them they didn't pay much attention to the forts. It was General Wayne who built the blockhouse and fixed over the place, when he came back from the Maumee Valley after he had whipped the Indians. He lived there for a little while in a

log house that he had put up, right near the blockhouse, but he got the gout so badly that at last he died there and Anthony Wayne was buried right at the foot of the bluff."

"Did he build the blockhouse that's here now?"

"No. This has been built since Captain Perry came."

"But General Wayne's body isn't there now, is it?"

"Oh, no. Four years ago some of the friends took it to Radnor. You know he was a Pennsylvanian and thought there wasn't any State like it.

"I believe," added Gordon suddenly, "that those rascals really *are* going to make an attack on Presque Isle! You see they are spreading out in the shape of a crescent and that looks as if they were planning something that the captain won't like."

"It does look so," joined in Amos, as again he looked long at the fleet whose glistening sails now could be plainly distinguished in the distance. "I happen to know," explained Gordon thoughtfully, "that Captain Perry has received word from General Porter over at Black Rock that the British were centered over at Long Point. That's straight across the lake from where we are. And word has come, too, that some of the Indians with Tecumseh, who gathered at Long Point, or Malden, or on the Detroit River somewhere—he has about 2,500 of them, I understand—have been turned loose on the country to cut off any

of our men who might be on their way to Fort Meigs or Fort Stephenson and at the same time the British Fleet had disappeared as if it had been sunk in Lake Erie. But they didn't fool Captain Perry, who knew that fleet would head for Presque Isle sooner or later and I guess he will be able to stave them off for a while anyway."

"If they get into the harbor they will make things lively for us!"

"I don't believe they can do that, now. The channel is narrow. They will have their troubles trying to get in there because there will be some cannon and a lot of men stationed at the blockhouse and along the bluffs and Barclay will think twice before he tries to get across the bar."

Suddenly an exclamation of dismay escaped Gordon's lips as the sheet-rope which he had been hauling in snapped and the sail of the little boat began to flap wildly in the wind.

"Take in the sail!" shouted Gordon. "Drop her! Look sharp! If she jibes she'll knock you overboard! Look sharp!" he called again as Amos sprang to obey the word. Fortunately the lad succeeded in taking in the sail without any mishap, though several times he was almost thrown from the deck as the little catboat lurched before the strong wind or was caught in the trough of the sea which was easily "kicked up" on shallow Lake Erie.

As soon as the sail was lowered and the boom had

been hauled in," Amos said excitedly. "This sheet rope won't hold anything. I can break it with my hands. What shall we do?"

"Do!" retorted Gordon sharply. "You take the tiller and I'll see if I can rig up something to help us out of this scrape."

As the younger boy obediently took the tiller and tried to keep the bow pointed toward the harbor, which still was far away, his companion opening his knife quickly began to cut the short ropes which were used in taking reefs in the sails. It was his only recourse, for a hasty search had revealed the fact that there was no spare rope on board.

Gordon's task had only begun, when in a low voice Amos said, "What's that sail off yonder?" pointing as he spoke behind him toward the extreme right of the fleet where a smaller sail now could be seen.

For a moment Gordon did not reply, as he stood gazing at the sight to which his companion had called his attention; then seizing the glasses he lifted them to his eyes and again looked a long time at the far-away sight.

"Can you make out what it is?" inquired Amos at last.

"Yes," replied Gordon sharply. "It's a yawl with a half-dozen men or more in it. It is rigged up with a sail and my opinion is that they are headed for us."

Amos's face turned pale at the words of his companion and he said eagerly, "If they are, they are a

good way behind us! Can't we do something to get away from them? There must be some rope somewhere aboard. Let us—"

"I'll let you handle the tiller. You do that and I'll rig up something which will serve to piece out the sheet rope. Maybe I can use a part of it."

Gordon was working rapidly now and it was manifest that his excitement was not less than that of his younger companion.

Swiftly he cut the ropes from the sail, tying them hastily together as he did so. At last he had fashioned a rope that was perhaps eight feet in length, but it was so knotted that it would be impossible for it to be used in the block or tackle. A piece of the original sheet-rope several feet in length was secured, though Gordon shook his head doubtfully as he tested its strength with his hands and broke it after a slight effort. "We may be able to work it," he exclaimed, "if we are close-hauled. That's our only hope. If this breeze keeps up we can't take in any reefs, and if the rope breaks, they will get us as sure as you're born. They are bearing down at us at a great rate!" he added as he glanced once more at the little sail in the distance.

Amos did not reply, though the expression on his face was eloquent of his fears. The little catboat now was bounding over the waves, splashing the water until both boys soon were drenched although neither apparently was mindful of his condition. The issue

of the race was too grave for them to think of other matters.

Gordon was handling the sheet-rope while his companion held the tiller. It was comparatively easy to keep their boat headed toward the harbor. The great fear in the mind of each was that the rope itself, upon which so much now depended, would play them false.

All conversation ceased while alternately they glanced at the far-away even line of white where the waves broke on the beach at the mouth of the harbor and at the little sail which steadily was gaining upon them.

"I don't see why they want to chase us," suggested Amos at last with something like a sob in his voice. "We're not doing any harm and we're not worth much if they get us."

"Keep up your courage, lad!" said Gordon, striving to speak cheerfully although as he spoke, he, too, looked fearfully behind him at the approaching yawl, in which the men now could be easily distinguished. "If I could only handle this sail, I would run away from them all right!" he declared; "but I haven't a decent sheet! I am afraid it will break. There it goes now!" he shouted abruptly as the worn rope suddenly parted again, and, with the sail flapping almost as loudly as the report of a gun, the catboat was left helpless before the wind which threatened soon to become a gale.

## CHAPTER XXI

### A MEETING ON THE LAKE

“TAKE in your sail! Look out for the boom! Be lively or we shall be swamped!” shouted Gordon as the little catboat took in water until it seemed as if she must capsize.

Amos instantly leaped to the bow and did his utmost to lower the sail. As part of this was already under water and the waves were pounding heavily, it was with the utmost difficulty that at last he succeeded in freeing his ropes and letting the water-soaked sail fall into the lake. Even then the peril of capsizing was not removed but Gordon now rushed to his aid and with their combined efforts the two young sailors at last succeeded in pulling in the boom and then hauled the heavy sail on board.

“Take the tiller,” ordered Gordon, “while I bail!” Seizing a wooden bowl, which by chance happened to be on board, he at once began to throw the water from the little catboat. When he began the water came almost to his knees, but his efforts were unremitting and in a little while the peril which had been threatening was gone.

“Look behind us!” suddenly exclaimed Amos. “I

believe they are after us!" he shouted in his excitement. Far away the small boat, which Gordon had suggested might be a big yawl rigged with a sail, was headed directly for the spot where the boys were struggling.

Gordon did not speak for a time, but he seized the glasses and looked long and earnestly at the little vessel in the distance.

"How many men are aboard?" asked Amos anxiously.

"Four, and perhaps five," replied Gordon without taking the glasses from his eyes. "I can't just make out. I guess there are six. Here, you take the glasses and see what you think of it."

Amos did as he was bidden and for a time he too was silent. At last turning once more to his companion he said, "They certainly are making time, and are headed straight for us! Do you really think that we're the ones they are after?"

"I'll tell you about that later," replied Gordon, as he reached again for the glasses. A second inspection, however, apparently did not provide any fresh hope.

Nearer and nearer sped the little boat; now bounding over the waves and then again sinking almost from sight as some unusually high crest hid them from view.

"Take the tiller," ordered Gordon, "and I'll see what can be done with the oars."

“Shall I get the guns?” inquired Amos in a low voice, as he glanced at the two heavy rifles which the boys had brought with them.

“No,” exclaimed Gordon quickly, “not yet, anyway. If we have to at the last we’ll see what we can do with them, but they are so wet, I am afraid we can’t use either one of them. I’m going to take one of the oars and if you’ll keep the tiller hard up, I think we can get so near the shore that these fellows won’t try to overhaul us.”

For a time neither spoke, though the anxiety of each increased with every passing minute. Occasionally holding the tiller between his knees Amos took the glasses and looked back at the little boat in the distance. There could be no question now, he thought, that it was headed directly toward them. The figures of the men were more plainly to be seen and the steady course which was held increased his conviction that he and Gordon were the objects of the pursuit.

“Let me take the other oar,” Amos exclaimed.

“No,” replied Gordon sharply. “We’ll make better time if you’ll handle the tiller and leave the oars to me.”

Gordon, whose arms were long and muscular, was pulling steadily upon the clumsy oars with which the boat was equipped.

When Amos glanced back at the wake, apparently the catboat was moving swiftly, though how much

of the disturbance of the water was due to the splashing they were making and how much to the effect of the wind and the waves he could not determine.

For a time the labor was steadily continued. Monotonously Gordon swung back and forth, as he pulled the heavy oars. The little boat was moving steadily, but not many minutes had elapsed before both boys were convinced that the other boat was bearing down so rapidly upon them that escape was improbable.

"Look yonder!" said Amos as he pointed toward the distant fleet. "They are all going about! They are changing their course!" he added.

"Maybe this boat will run away after all," suggested Gordon in a low voice. "It'll have to come about, too, and keep up with the others. If they do that will give us a chance to go ashore."

But the pursuing boat held steadily to its course. Nearer and still nearer it approached until the forms of the five men on board were distinctly seen. They were clad in the uniforms of the British sailors and there was no question now that they belonged to the crew of one of the ships in the near-by fleet.

At last the boat of the pursuers was not more than a hundred feet behind the catboat. Gordon was still pulling on his oars with unchanging determination.

The wind which had been holding strong now in a measure died away but the change was too late to affect the boys from Perry's fleet. Once more Amos

took the glasses, as what he thought was a hail came from the other boat, and he looked back at his pursuers. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of surprise, as he said, "That's Tom at the tiller!"

"Tom who?" inquired Gordon.

"I don't know the rest of his name," said Amos, "but he was one of the press-gang that took me to York."

"What is he doing on Lake Erie, if he belonged to the Lake Ontario fleet?"

"I can't tell you, but I believe that's Tom, as sure as you're born!"

"Will he know you?"

"I guess so, though he never saw me dressed in this uniform."

"Well, if he belonged to the press-gang, he won't be likely to show much mercy to you or me either. The only thing is to keep him from recognizing you if we can. Can't you do something to yourself?"

"I'm afraid not," replied Amos, as he looked about for some means of disguising himself, but nothing was found, until he discovered a broken wooden bowl partly filled with the grease which was used to rub down the masts. The sight of some loose oakum instantly suggested a plan, however, and the lad soon daubed his face with the greasy mixture until it is doubtful if his own mother would have recognized him had she seen him in the boat.

At this moment there came a faint sound of a hail from the pursuers. "Don't answer them," said Gordon to his companion hastily in a low voice.

The hail was repeated and as the boys looked back they saw one of the British sailors standing on the bow of the little boat. In his hand was a large horse-pistol, and apparently he was prepared to enforce his demands in a way that could not be mistaken.

"I am going to stop rowing," said Gordon a moment later, "and we'll have to take what is coming to us. Shove those guns of ours under the sail. We won't give them up unless we have to. No," he added abruptly, "I am not going to stop rowing. If they want us they'll have to come and take us where we are."

Twice the hail from the pursuing boat was repeated and then to the consternation of both boys a small brass one-pounder, whose sides flashed in the sunlight, suddenly spoke. Even here fortune seemed to have failed the boys for the ball struck the mast, breaking it as if it had been of clay. When Gordon turned from the sight of the splintered mast and looked at his companion he saw that Amos's face was deathly pale.

The boat shivered under the shock as if it had been struck by some mighty invisible thing.

"Don't be scared," said Gordon encouragingly. "They might have saved that shot, for we couldn't get away from them, anyway. They have got us now

and we'll have to make the best of it. But keep a stiff upper lip, lad, and don't show them, even if you are so afraid that you can't keep inside your shoes."

A shout from the pursuers followed and it was not long before, with a sweep, their boat came alongside and Tom sprang on board.

As the sailor regained his footing, he found himself face to face with Amos, and the lad instantly was aware that he was recognized. "I think 'e is Amos Proper," said Tom in surprise. "I'll make fast this rope and then I'll talk with 'e."

In a brief time the sailor made his rope fast about the base of the shattered mast and as his companion quickly lowered their sail, the two boats soon were lashed together.

Apparently Tom was not in command of the little force, for another man dressed in the uniform of an ensign at once came on board and ignoring the sailor gave his attention to the boys.

"Do you belong at Presque Isle?" he inquired sharply.

"You guessed it the first time," answered Gordon in apparent indifference.

"What were you doing out here on the lake?"

"We came out to see the redcoats scoot as soon as they thought Captain Perry would send anybody after them," answered Amos, as he glanced at the British fleet which now was far away.

“Just answer my questions!” said the young British officer. “How many boats has Perry?”

“Enough to sink the whole of Barclay’s squadron,” retorted Amos unabashed.

“I don’t need you to tell me,” retorted the sailor with a scowl. “You have two Yankee brigs you call the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*.”

“Then why did you ask me?” demanded Amos impatiently.

“You have a little schooner called the *Ariel*, and two other little sloops, the *Porcupine* and the *Tigress*.”

“You seem to be very well acquainted with our fleet,” said Gordon. “Perhaps you will be better acquainted still, before many days have passed.”

Ignoring the replies the ensign demanded quickly, “How many of these are ready to put to sea?”

“You had better run into the harbor and find out for yourself! I might make a mistake, if I should give you the figures now,” answered Gordon.

“How many men are there now at Presque Isle?”

“I haven’t counted them lately,” replied Gordon. “I don’t know but there are more than I can count. There are enough to sing, ‘Remember the Raisin River.’”

Amos was more alarmed by the boldness of his companion than he was by the threats of the men who had boarded their little boat. Indeed, upon Tom’s face appeared an expression of such good-nature that

he could not believe that any of the crew had evil designs against them.

“Do you see that flag yonder?” demanded Gordon, suddenly pointing to a flag on the Wayne Blockhouse, which could be faintly seen in the distance.

“I do, sir,” replied the Briton.

“Well, there’s a flag that Captain Dacres called, when he saw it at the masthead of the *Constitution*, ‘A piece of Yankee bunting!’ He found out that it was a little more than that, and so will you! Your press-gangs are all of them going to learn pretty soon that they can’t steal men where the Yankee ‘bunting’ is floating from any masthead of any boat of any fleet.”

“Hi beg your pardon, sir,” interposed Tom, who had taken no part in the conversation, “but hif we’re going to join the fleet before night-fall, Hi’m thinkin’ we had better be starting.”

“Not until I have had a look at this craft,” said the ensign, and at once began his investigations. Every open or suggestive spot on board was searched, but nothing of any importance was found, the two wet guns being regarded as useless. Then turning to Amos the young officer demanded sharply, “How many boats has Perry besides those which are on the stocks?”

“I don’t know,” answered Amos. “I have just come—”

“How many men are there?”

"I can't tell you that either," answered the lad quietly.

"Have you heard any one say anything about his putting to sea?"

"Yes, sir."

"What have you heard?"

"I have heard some of the men say that they would have to sail up the Detroit River and search along the shores to find where the British fleet were hiding."

Tom laughed loudly at the boy's words, but his companion scowled as he said, "You are a bold one, young man; but you'll need all your spirits before you see Presque Isle again."

Once more Amos's face blanched at the implied threat and he glanced at his comrade, who apparently was unmoved and was boldly staring at their questioner.

"Tom, I think you're right," said the ensign, turning to his comrades after a momentary silence. "We must start back for the fleet. I am sorry we can't go ashore, but I fancy there will be some way to make these two Yankee lubbers disgorge more of what they know of Captain Perry than they have told us. A taste of the cat or a few days in the brig are mighty big helps to conversation."

"Don't 'e bother with the lad," suggested Tom in apparent indifference. "Leave 'im to get ashore if 'e can. Take this one," he suggested, pointing to Gordon as he spoke, "and let the hinfant go free."

“That’s all right,” answered the ensign promptly. “That’s a good suggestion and that’s what I’ll do.”

The two boys stared blankly at each other as they heard the decision and for a moment Amos was about to protest, but as his friend shook his head warningly he remained silent, fearful of the evils beyond those which were threatening.

In spite of his disappointment he was plainly relieved when he saw that Gordon was not likely to offer any resistance, at least at the time, and in response to the ensign’s order speedily took his place in the other boat. Almost before Amos was aware of what had taken place, the catboat was set free, the sail of the other boat was hoisted and his recent visitors were speeding over the waves of Lake Erie on their way to join the distant fleet. He soon saw that his own boat was drifting toward the shore and that unless he took the tiller in hand he would be landed a mile or more below the bay which he was seeking.

Fascinated by the sight of the disappearing boat, however, it was several minutes before he was fully aware of his own risk.

Then quickly taking advantage of the wind, and fearful that the promise which Tom had secured for him might be withdrawn he took the oar which Gordon recently had been using and desperately began to pull.

Amos speedily discovered, however, that his prog-

ress was in a direction which he could not altogether control and soon he abandoned the oar and grasped the tiller, once more trusting to the wind to help him. He knew that more time would be required in this manner before he could gain the shore, but he would be better able to select his landing-place and the lad was aware that this was a matter of even more importance than speed.

It was difficult for him to turn away his gaze from the departing boat in which his companion now was a prisoner. Why he had been left and Gordon taken, was not altogether clear in his mind; but the fact was manifest and as the distance between the little boats increased Amos's spirits rose and he gave himself more completely to the task of heading the craft toward the bay where Perry's men and fleet were to be found.

Again the wind arose and drove the hapless cat-boat before it. It was more difficult now for Amos to keep the little craft headed for the opening in the bay. The waves were rising as the wind increased and what threatened to be a gale was almost upon him. The shore now was not more than a mile distant, he thought, as he glanced at the wooded banks before him.

Drenched with the spray, alarmed by the fact that the boat was filling and yet unable to protect himself from the force of the wind, the lad was compelled to exert himself to the utmost of his strength

in order to keep anything like a straight course. Even that plan soon was abandoned and his sole hope now was of being able to land anywhere on the American side of the lake.

## CHAPTER XXII

### A YOUNGER PERRY

**D**RIVEN helpless before the wind Amos still clung to the tiller and waited. Glancing occasionally behind him he saw the British fleet now far away, but the difficulties of his own position kept his thoughts mostly upon his own peril. The waves which frequently dashed completely over the catboat had drenched him, but the difficulties of maintaining his hold upon the tiller kept him so busy that he was not suffering from cold.

Steadily before the wind the lad was driven and at last he was rejoiced when he discovered that his efforts to get the little craft into the harbor were likely to meet with success. Glancing for a moment over the side he saw the shallow bottom beneath him. He was aware now that he was near the bar at the entrance of the harbor, perhaps already was caught on it. He glanced toward the shore at either side and was convinced that he was correct in his surmise. As the harbor here was unusually shallow, and, driven by the force of the gale the waves were rougher than they had been in the open lake, he was compelled to

exert himself to the utmost of his strength in order to keep his boat head on.

And yet swift as his flight was and compelled as he was to give his undivided attention to keeping the water-logged little craft from capsizing or from being caught in the trough of the heavy seas, nevertheless Amos was conscious of several questions which even then flashed into his mind. How would Captain Perry ever be able to take his fleet, after its completion, across the shallow waters of the mouth of the bay? Why did not the British take the Americans before the latter were able to use the harbor? If the British gunboats should blockade the entrance, why could they not send men to fire at the brigs which were yet on the stocks? Many such questions were in the lad's mind, despite his own peril, as his little boat, occasionally scraping the sand, swept across the bar, and at last was safe beyond the reach of the boisterous waves. He gave one final look behind him and saw just above the horizon the sails of the disappearing fleet.

The seizure of Gordon Hopkins was depressing. Apparently the most of his warmest friends, Amos thought, were destined to fall into the hands of the enemy, or worse. Where was Hiram? What had become of Simeon? Had he escaped from the press-gang only to become a victim of the vengeful followers of Tecumseh? What had become of "Sir Walter"? Amos recalled some of the bantering and not ill-na-

tured boasting of his friend whose true name he did not know. And now Gordon Hopkins, too, had gone. Amos thought again of the genial face of the old sailor, Tom, and was hopeful that Gordon might receive some of the care of the big-hearted man, which had been given him when he was a prisoner.

The questions were all unanswered, however, and as Amos's progress was slow and there were still five miles to be covered before he would be among his comrades once more, the lad endeavored to bail out his boat preparatory to rigging some kind of a sail, which would help him on his way.

After repeated efforts, the little craft was made somewhat less unwieldy by the young sailor's success in bailing out his boat. He was aware that it had been strained and was leaking, but now that his gravest peril was passed, with new courage he began to try to rig a sail.

A measure of success attended his efforts and in a little while without any boom or sheet rope, Amos had succeeded in hoisting a small part of the main-sail and the catboat at once responded to the increased impetus.

Ignorant of the shallows or perilous places in the bay, for a time the determined boy tried to follow the channel, but when a half hour had elapsed he discovered that his efforts were unavailing and that frequently he was sailing over stretches where the keel of his boat was only a few inches above the sandy

bottom. He was much nearer the shore and also nearer the left bank now than he had been, and before him he saw a low projecting point of land covered with trees and directly in his course. As he drew nearer he succeeded in guiding the little boat so that he was not more than fifty feet from the shore. Indeed it was in his mind to abandon the water-logged and leaking craft and make his way across the land back to the place where the fleet was waiting.

Suddenly Amos saw before him on the extreme point, a boy who was apparently two or three years younger than he. The sight was so unexpected that Amos did not respond to the hail which he received.

When the summons was repeated, however, he shouted, "Go down the beach. I'll come ashore, just as soon as I can make it. This tub is leaking and she doesn't answer her tiller very well, so you'll have to meet me where I can make a landing."

The boy on the shore instantly turned and did as he had been bidden. Sometimes Amos saw him as he came out against the trees and then again the lad would disappear from sight.

After repeated efforts the young skipper at last succeeded in sending his boat ashore, and as he seized the painter and leaped out he quickly was assisted by the waiting boy. As soon as the catboat had been hauled as far up as Amos thought it was necessary to avoid her being drawn out to sea, still holding the

painter in his hand, he turned and looked curiously at the boy before him.

"My name is Alexander Perry," said the lad with a laugh.

"Where do you belong?" inquired Amos.

"Oh, over here at Presque Isle," said the boy, smiling again. "I have seen you there and that was the reason why I hailed you."

"What are you doing at Presque Isle?" asked Amos in surprise. "You aren't enrolled there, are you?"

"Yes, sir, I am," replied the boy promptly.

"I shouldn't think they would take a fellow as young as you are."

Amos spoke not unkindly, but there was in his tone, perhaps unconsciously, a note of superiority, due to the difference between their ages.

Alexander was quick to perceive the implied condescension and he said a little warmly, "I am almost as large as you are and I guess I am about as strong. If you want to try me, we'll have a side-hold right here on the beach."

"I'll take your word for it," said Amos good-naturedly. "I have had my hands full coming back from the Lake. I guess Captain Perry is going to have need of all of us strong fellows, whether we are boys or men."

"It's a shame," said Alexander, "the way my brother—"

"Your brother?" broke in Amos. "Who is your brother?" He was looking with renewed interest at the lad before him for now he recalled several rumors which had been heard at Presque Isle. As he glanced at the face of the young stranger he now saw what he had not noticed before, and consequently was not unprepared for the answer which he received.

"My brother's name is Oliver Hazard Perry," said Alexander.

"Are *you* his brother?" asked Amos slowly.

"Yes, sir-ee!"

"Did you come up here with him?"

"I did. He said he wanted me to start in younger than he did, so all the way from Rhode Island, I have been with him."

"What are you doing out here now?" inquired Amos.

"Oh, some of us were stationed along the shore to keep watch. If the British showed any signs of coming too near the harbor, I was to fire my pistol, and another man who is half a mile farther up the shore was to fire his as soon as he heard mine."

"I see," said Amos slowly. "He has a watch stationed all along the water on both sides, probably."

"That's right."

"I have just come from the lake," exclaimed Amos. "I went out with another man in a catboat to watch the fleet."

"You look as if you had been in a fight with them," said Alexander, as he glanced at the shattered mast.

"I have," replied Amos, as an expression of doubt appeared on Alexander's face; but Amos's story soon convinced the lad that he was speaking truly. The interest of Alexander was keen now, and when Amos also told him about the seizure of Gordon Hopkins the younger boy's anger was still more aroused.

"Why don't they go and fight like men?" he demanded. "Even if we haven't over three hundred to man all our fleet, we'll meet them more than half way! I guess we can do a little of what Captain Lawrence did on the Point,—

"Oh, Johnny Bull, my joe, John, your *Peacocks* keep at home,  
And ne'er let British seamen on a *Frolic* hither come,  
For we've *Hornets* and we've *Wasps*, John, who, as you  
doubtless know,  
Carry stingers in their tails, Oh, Johnny Bull, my joe."

"What's that you're singing?" inquired Amos, interested as much in the information as he was in the song.

"Haven't you ever heard 'Brother Jonathan's Epistle to Johnny Bull'?"

"No."

"Where have you been all the time?"

"I haven't been here very long," exclaimed Amos, now feeling somewhat uncomfortable himself at his lack of experience in the presence of a boy younger

than himself, but who manifestly was familiar with more of the details of the war than he.

“Why, you don’t mean to say that you never heard of what Captain Lawrence did to the *Hornet*?”

“No, I never heard,” answered Amos, his face flushing slightly.

“Whew! I have known that many weeks,” said Alexander, a trifle importantly. “You have heard of the *Hornet*, haven’t you?”

“Yes,” replied Amos somewhat dubiously.

“Why, the *Hornet* was one of the twenty-one boats that we had when we declared war on Great Britain. I can tell you the name of every one if you want it.”

“What were they?”

“The *Constitution*, rated 44, mounting 58 guns, Captain Hull; *United States*, rated 44, mounting 58, Captain Decatur; *President*, rated 44, mounting 58, Commodore Rodgers; *Chesapeake*, rated 36, mounting 44, ordinary; *New York*, rated 36, mounting 44, ordinary; *Constellation*, rated 36, mounting 44, ordinary; *Congress*, rated 36, mounting 44, Captain Smith; *Boston*, rated 32, ordinary; *Essex*, rated 32, Captain Porter; *Adams*, rated 32, ordinary; *John Adams*, rated 26, Captain Ludlow; *Wasp*, rated 16, mounting 18, Captain Jones; *Hornet*, rated 16, mounting 18, Captain Lawrence.”

“Is that the *Hornet* you are talking about?” asked Amos.

“Of course,” replied Alexander sagely. “The

other vessels were the *Siren*, *Argus*, *Oneida*, *Vixen*, *Notherless*, *Enterprise*, and *Viper*. We had four bomb vessels named the *Vengeance*, *Spitfire*, *Etna* and *Vesuvius*. Of course we had a few gunboats scattered along the coast from Boston to New Orleans, but eighty-six of these were ordinary and only sixty-two were in commission. The gunboats you know were numbered, and didn't have names."

Amos looked at his companion now with increased respect. The lad knew so much more than he concerning the conditions in the American navy at the outbreak of the war that he was entitled to respect. "Tell me about the fight of the *Hornet*. What was it she fought? Did she win? What became of her? Where is she now?"

"Why, she put up as good a fight as the *Wasp* did when she took the *Frolic* the 18th of last October."

"I have heard about that," said Amos. "But tell me about the *Hornet*."

"Why it was this way," said Alexander. "After the *Constitution* took the *Java* on the 29th of last December—you know that was off the coast of Brazil—Commodore Bainbridge started for home leaving Captain James Lawrence in command of the *Hornet* to blockade the *Bon Citoyenne* in the harbor of San Salvador. You see he had heard that she was loaded up with gold or some other valuable stuff, and Captain Lawrence wanted her."

“I don’t wonder,” suggested Amos. “Did he get her?”

“No,” replied Alexander disgustedly. “On the 24th of January a British ship of war, the *Montagu*, came up from Rio de Janerio and raised the blockade. You see she carried seventy-four guns, and the *Hornet* only eighteen, so, though she was driven back into the harbor and the redcoats thought they had her, as the very next night was dark as Egypt, the first thing they knew the *Hornet* slipped out and went cruising up the coast. She kept this up for a month and took I don’t know how many prizes. At last, about half past three o’clock in the afternoon of February 24th, while she was chasing an English brig off the mouth of the Demerara River, Captain Lawrence suddenly found a man-of-war just outside the bar with her ensign all set.

“Captain Lawrence made up his mind to fight the Britisher and he put out to sea. Between the *Hornet* and the boat she was after was the Carobana Bank. While he was going around it, he saw another sail bearing down upon him, and when she came near enough he saw that she was a man-of-war brig with the British colors flying at her masthead. Captain Lawrence called his men to quarters and cleared his ship for action, and got ready for his enemy, who was trying to do the same thing and before they knew it they became within half a pistol-shot of each other and both tried to fire broadsides at about the same

time. After they had passed, each of them tried to wear short round to get a raking fire. With a perfect blaze the *Hornet* came down upon the *Peacock*, that was the name of the British brig, and in fifteen minutes the brig not only struck her colors, but raised signals of distress. When Lieutenant Shubrick was sent to take possession of her, he found that the boat was sinking with six feet of water in her hold, that her commander was killed, and the most of her crew had fallen. The *Hornet's* men now had to do their best to bring off the wounded and save the vessel. They threw the guns of the *Peacock* overboard, plugged up the holes made by the shot, but though they worked like Trojans, the boat finally sank and thirteen of the *Peacock's* crew and several of the *Hornet's*, suddenly went down."

"Were they all drowned?" asked Amos.

"No, they picked up a few of them. The crew of the *Hornet* had to divide their clothes with the *Peacock's* men."

"That was mighty good of them," suggested Amos.

"That's what the Britishers thought, too," said Alexander, "for when they finally got into New York they wrote a public letter of thanks to Captain Lawrence. And they had good reason for it," he added, "because if the captain had sailed away after the *Peacock* struck her colors, he would have saved more of his own crew, for he lost more men trying to save

the others than he had in the fight." And Alexander began to sing,—

"For 'twas the proud *Peacock* to the bottom did go;  
He lost more in *saving* than *conquering* the foe."

"I hope your brother," said Amos, "will be able to do something like that on Lake Erie."

"He will," said Alexander confidently, "if the Government will only give him something to fight with. But how are you going back?" he suddenly asked.

"Will that boat take us across the bay?"

"I'm afraid not," said Amos.

"Come on, then," said Alexander cheerfully. "We'll make our way across the country." And once more he began to sing,—

"Oh, Johnny Bull, my joe, John, your *Peacocks* keep at home.  
And ne'er let British seamen on a *Frolic* hither come,  
For we've *Hornets* and we've *Wasps*, John, who, as you  
doubtless know,  
Carry stingers in their tails, Oh, Johnny Bull, my joe."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### AN ENCOUNTER IN THE WOODS

“THE first thing we’ll have to do,” suggested Amos quickly, “will be to take this catboat of mine and hide it somewhere.”

“All right,” responded Alexander promptly. “That won’t take long. You get aboard and toss me the painter and I’ll tow you along the shore. Here’s the very place we want,” he said a few minutes later when the boys discovered a small cove on whose shores were thick bushes that would conceal any object within unless one were especially searching for it.

Amos secured his gun which was on board, though now it was so wet as to be useless, and grasping a few other objects in his hand, leaped ashore and then helped his companion haul the yawl far up on the sandy beach in the hiding place which had been found.

“We’ll be all right now,” said Alexander, as the boys turned away.

“Are you sure you know the way?” asked Amos somewhat anxiously.

The lad laughed as he replied, “I found my way out here and if I can do that I can find my way back, can’t I? You see,” he added, “I am a true Yankee,

I never answer one question except by asking another."

Amos said no more and the boys at once started on their journey through the woods.

Amos had no fear of losing his way if they kept close to the shore of the bay, but Alexander selected a route that was sometimes within sight of the blue waters and again would lead into the depths of the forest. However, Amos made no protest and followed his young guide until a quarter of an hour or more had elapsed since their start.

Suddenly Alexander, who was in advance, stopped abruptly and placing the fingers of one hand on his lips motioned to Amos to stop.

"What is it?" asked Amos in a whisper as he cautiously advanced to the side of his companion.

"Listen!" said the younger boy in a whisper.

"What did you hear?"

Both boys were silent for a brief time and then Amos understood the reason for his companion's unexpected caution.

Not far away he heard the voices of men engaged in a low conversation. It was impossible to see them or to determine how many there were, but the very fact that they were hidden among the trees and that their conversation was carried on in low tones implied that something was wrong and Amos was soon as excited as Alexander.

"You wait here," whispered Alexander, and be-

fore Amos was aware of what his companion was about to do, the lad had crept stealthily into the near-by bushes and disappeared from sight. Uncertain as to what he ought to do, Amos soon decided that he would remain where he was and await the return of his companion.

The minutes slowly passed and the low tones of the men were unbroken. Occasionally the voice of one rose a little higher than the others' and betrayed something of what Amos believed to be an excitement under which they were laboring. He was unable, however, to distinguish what they were saying and impatiently awaited the coming of Alexander.

How much time had elapsed he was unable to decide when at last he saw the lad returning as cautiously as he previously had departed. In a brief time Alexander was by his side once more and as soon as Amos glanced at his face he knew that the boy had heard something that was startling.

"Who are they?"

"British Jackies," replied Alexander. "They came here last night, and slipped across the bar in the dark."

"What were they doing?"

"Making soundings in the harbor."

Startled by Alexander's words Amos looked about him in alarm and for a brief time both boys were silent.

The sound of the voices still could be heard and

it was manifest that whoever the men might be they were not planning to depart at once.

"What did you make of it?" inquired Amos at last.

"I make of it," said Alexander, "that these men came in here to get these soundings, as I said, and have hidden here in the woods during the daytime and when night comes they're either going to slip out of the bay and go back to the fleet or wherever they came from, or else they are going to keep up the work they have begun."

"How many are there?"

"Three."

"Are you sure they are Jackies?"

"Yes. They are all wearing the uniform anyway, and I guess they wouldn't be doing that if they were Yankees."

"Let's get a little further away from here," suggested Amos, as he pulled his companion by the arm.

Both boys at once hastily withdrew from the spot, though each carefully noted the landmarks by which it could again be found, if desired. When they had withdrawn far enough to make certain their voices could not be heard, Amos said, "They have got a boat landed somewhere here and we must find it."

"That's right," acknowledged Alexander quickly. "Strange I hadn't thought of that, but where do you suppose it is?"

"They have either drawn it up on the shore somewhere, or have hidden it as we did ours. Did you

hear any of them say they were not going to try to go away before night?"

"That's what they said."

"We might wait here and follow them when they start."

"And be in time to say good-by when they go on board their craft?"

"It's just about noon now," suggested Amos as he looked at the sky. "If they really are not going to leave before night we might go back to Presque Isle and get help and take all three of them prisoners."

"That's what we'll do," responded Alexander promptly. "Will you go or shall I?"

"You know the way better than I do," said Amos. "I have never been out here in the woods at all, though I guess I wouldn't get lost, but you will make better time than I can and besides I think your brother will be more likely to listen to what you have to say and send men out here, than he would if I should carry him the word."

"I'll do it," said Alexander, promptly looking to the priming of his gun as he spoke.

The lad, sturdy and well-grown for one of his years, would be no light foe if a man chanced to meet him in the forest. There was a determined expression in his face, and his eyes were shining in his excitement. "Hold on a minute," called Amos; "we must decide where we'll meet when you come back."

"We'll meet right here by this point," replied

Alexander as he pointed to a little promontory that extended a short distance into the waters of the bay.

Before Amos could say more, his companion departed, moving swiftly into the depths of the forest and disappearing from sight before Amos was even aware that he had been left alone.

For a brief time the lad sat on the bluff where his companion had left him and thought carefully over the best plan for him to follow. In a short time he concluded that the boat in which the men had come could not be far away. Neither had they left it where it might be seen by any of the Americans passing on the shore or bay. Perhaps they had it concealed as he and Alexander had hidden the catboat among the bushes.

Cautiously and slowly the lad began to make his way amongst the trees, moving along the shore in the direction of the lake. His first impression was that the boat in which the men had come had been left nearer the outlet in order that they might save time and distance in case of danger, but when he had gone what he thought at least was a half mile and had found no indications of the boat for which he was searching, he retraced his way and as he came near the place where he had left the men, his precautions redoubled. He darted from tree to tree and before he advanced again glanced in every direction to make sure that he was not seen. He continued his search for a half-mile in the opposite direction, however, but

it still proved unavailable and he was almost on the point of deciding that the British sailors must have left their boat on the shore of the lake after their investigations in the bay and had returned to the woods so that they might more carefully watch events at Presque Isle.

Convinced that his conclusion was correct Amos was about to return once more to the lake so that he might search at least a part of the adjacent shore, when suddenly he saw before him a pile of brush near the water. There was nothing suspicious in the branches, which might have been driven by some storm across the bay, but as he glanced at the sandy beach he discovered there several footprints of men. The sight instantly caused him to stop and in considerable excitement he cautiously began to tear the bushes apart.

He had removed only a few of the dry branches when he saw that a boat had been concealed beneath the pile. Hastily restoring the branches which he had removed, he glanced quickly about him to make certain that he was not observed and then ran swiftly back into the forest.

He was keenly elated over his success, and greatly excited by the discovery of the hidden boat. He had investigated far enough to discover that the sail had been carefully wrapped and was also placed beneath the brush-heap. The little which he saw of the boat also convinced him that his discovery was of no small

value. Again he looked about him and concluded that the British sailors had not stationed any watch near the place where their boat had been concealed. He was doubly cautious now and eager for the return of Alexander and the men whom he doubtless could secure from his brother.

“What did you think of it?”

Startled by the unexpected question Amos looked up and saw standing before him the man who had assumed his own name when the lad had been brought with the British as a prisoner to Sackett's Harbor. It was true the man's gun was held in such a position that it was ready for instant use, but the half-mocking smile on his face was almost as confusing to the startled lad as was the unexpected hail.

“Think of what?” Amos managed to stammer.

“Ha! Ha! Never mind waiting for me to explain. I have been watching you for half an hour and suspected that you were looking for something.”

“Well, I found it!” retorted Amos. His rifle was useless because it had been water-soaked in the cat-boat. It would be folly for him to attempt to struggle with this man, and he realized that his own position was exceedingly perilous. If only Alexander and the men from Presque Isle would come! Almost unconsciously he glanced into the woods but no one could be seen.

“Looking for anybody in particular?” laughed the man.

"There isn't anybody around here except three British Jackies and you," broke in Amos bitterly. "It usually takes about four British sailors to capture one Yankee boy."

"Come," exclaimed the man in a tantalizing manner. "Then you have joined Perry's band, have you? It looks to me as if he was trying to rob the cradles. Oh, I know he hasn't very many—not over three hundred men, all told. I know he has his two brigs about ready to slide off the stocks. I understand he has sent on to Commodore Chauncey for reënforcements, but I don't believe any of them will surprise him the way Commodore Barclay will when he stops to pay a visit at Presque Isle."

"How did you know all that?" demanded Amos, looking at the man as he spoke, and unable to conceal his surprise.

"Oh, the Yankees aren't doing much that we don't know," retorted the man. "I don't think you're very much of a find, I'll be honest with you, but such as you are I think I had better take you along with me."

The sailor's attitude and bearing were so indifferent and he was apparently so good-natured that at first Amos did not take in the full meaning of his words, but when the order was repeated and he was told to follow his captor the lad realized that his troubles were not slight.

Apparently there was no escape, and yet in Amos's

heart there was a hope that Alexander and some of the men from Presque Isle might come to the place before he would be taken away by the British sailors who had been making their investigations in the harbor.

In sheer desperation and hardly aware of what he was doing, Amos suddenly leaped at the man beside him and with one strong pull wrenched his gun from his hand. Before he could bring the weapon to his shoulder, his enemy instantly made an effort to regain the rifle; but Amos with one strong effort flung the gun far out into the bay.

The "good-nature" of the man instantly disappeared. Savagely he turned upon the boy striving to catch him by the neck, but Amos Proper was no weakling though he was only a lad in years. Under his smooth skin his muscles were almost as hard as wood and were plainly to be seen as he moved. Thrusting out one foot, after the manner in which he and his companions had been accustomed to trip one another in the games during the few days when they were privileged to attend school, his pursuer now fell headlong and before he could rise again Amos had begun to run swiftly from the place.

He had not gone far, however, before misfortune again overtook him. His right foot caught under the projecting and exposed root of a tree and he in turn fell headlong upon the earth. Before he could rise, his pursuer was upon him, and though the lad strug-

gled desperately, his efforts were without avail. His hands were securely bound by a leather strap, and then with a brutal kick his captor ordered him to rise.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE "CAMELS"

PAINFULLY Amos struggled to his feet and after a brief hesitation moved forward as his captor commanded. To defend himself was absolutely impossible and indeed his arms were drawn so tightly behind him that he was suffering.

The mocking manner of the second Amos now returned and he said jeeringly: "I am afraid your brother won't be able to get you out of trouble this time."

Amos did not reply. He was aware that the direction in which he was moving was toward the place where the three men had been discovered in their hiding place.

The suspicions which he and Alexander had had that the men were making investigations and securing information about the conditions at Presque Isle and also trying to locate the channel of the harbor, were now confirmed. How it was that the man who escaped from Sackett's Harbor by claiming the name under which Amos had been set free should now be with Barclay's fleet on Lake Erie, was a mystery, but

the young prisoner's thoughts were drawn to his own peril, and other matters were soon ignored.

They had advanced only a short distance when Amos was startled by what he thought was the sound of voices of men in the near-by forest. When the unexpected sound was repeated he was confirmed in his opinion. Instantly it flashed into his mind that Alexander and the men whom he had secured at Presque Isle were now approaching. Amos's heart was beating rapidly in his excitement, and he glanced at his captor to see whether or not he also had heard the sounds which had aroused him. There was, however, nothing in the manner of the man to betray any feeling of alarm, and satisfied that "Amos" was unaware of the presence of his enemies, the true Amos tried to bear off a little, as he advanced, toward the direction from which the sounds had come.

His plight was desperate. Unless help came from Alexander and his followers, without doubt he would be carried away by the band and sent across the lake where Gordon Hopkins was to be taken. Amos, as he recalled how he had been left behind by the men in the British yawl, felt once more something of the chagrin that was mingled with his rejoicing over his escape, but the present pulling of his arms and hands was convincing of the fact that now he was no longer looked upon as an "hinfant" not worthy of consideration.

To escape from his captor seemed to be out of the

question. If once he should be taken into the presence of the three men, either they would try to make him give them the information they desired or else they would take him with them when they departed.

The lad was tempted to shout and thus inform his friends where he was. His uncertainty, however, as to whether the men whose coming he thought he had heard really were from Captain Perry's force, or not, was so great that he dared not even make the attempt. The sounds which he had heard were not repeated and almost convinced that he had been mistaken, Amos Proper silently proceeded on his way, and in a brief time was pushed by his captor into the very midst of the little band, whose presence he and Alexander had discovered.

The three sailors, with an exclamation of anger or surprise, leaped to their feet and as they did so every man drew his pistol from his belt.

"Be easy, lads. It's nothing but an 'hinfant,' " exclaimed Amos's captor. "He won't give us any trouble. But there are some other things he will give us!" he added.

"Where did you find him, Dick?" asked one of the men.

In spite of his fear Amos was aware that the name of the man who had made him prisoner was not Amos, but Dick. In a moment, however, he was listening to the questions which were rapidly being asked of him. He quietly told the men who he was and also

acknowledged that he was one of the force that was working on the fleet at Presque Isle and that he expected to put to sea with his companions as soon as Captain Perry decided that the proper time had come.

"He will never find that time," laughed one of the men not ill-naturedly.

"Barclay has him bottled up, and that's where he will stay, I'm thinking. If he tries to get away he will run straight into the arms of the Commodore. He learned how to do that trick when he was with Nelson at Trafalgar."

When further questions were asked of Amos at first he refused to reply and then quickly changing his mind gave such exaggerated answers that the men at first stared at him, then laughed and at last became angry.

"We'll have to teach the Yankee cub how to talk properly!" suggested one of the band.

"That's his name anyway," exclaimed Dick. "His name is Amos Proper. I have met the lad before. His father and all his brothers are in the Yankee Army or Navy. We caught this fellow young enough to check off any ambition he may have in the same line, though he is regularly enrolled here, he informs me, and expects some day to be a sailor-man."

"We'll have to show him how to live up to his name," said one of the men as he drew back his fist, and struck the defenceless boy a blow that felled him to the ground.

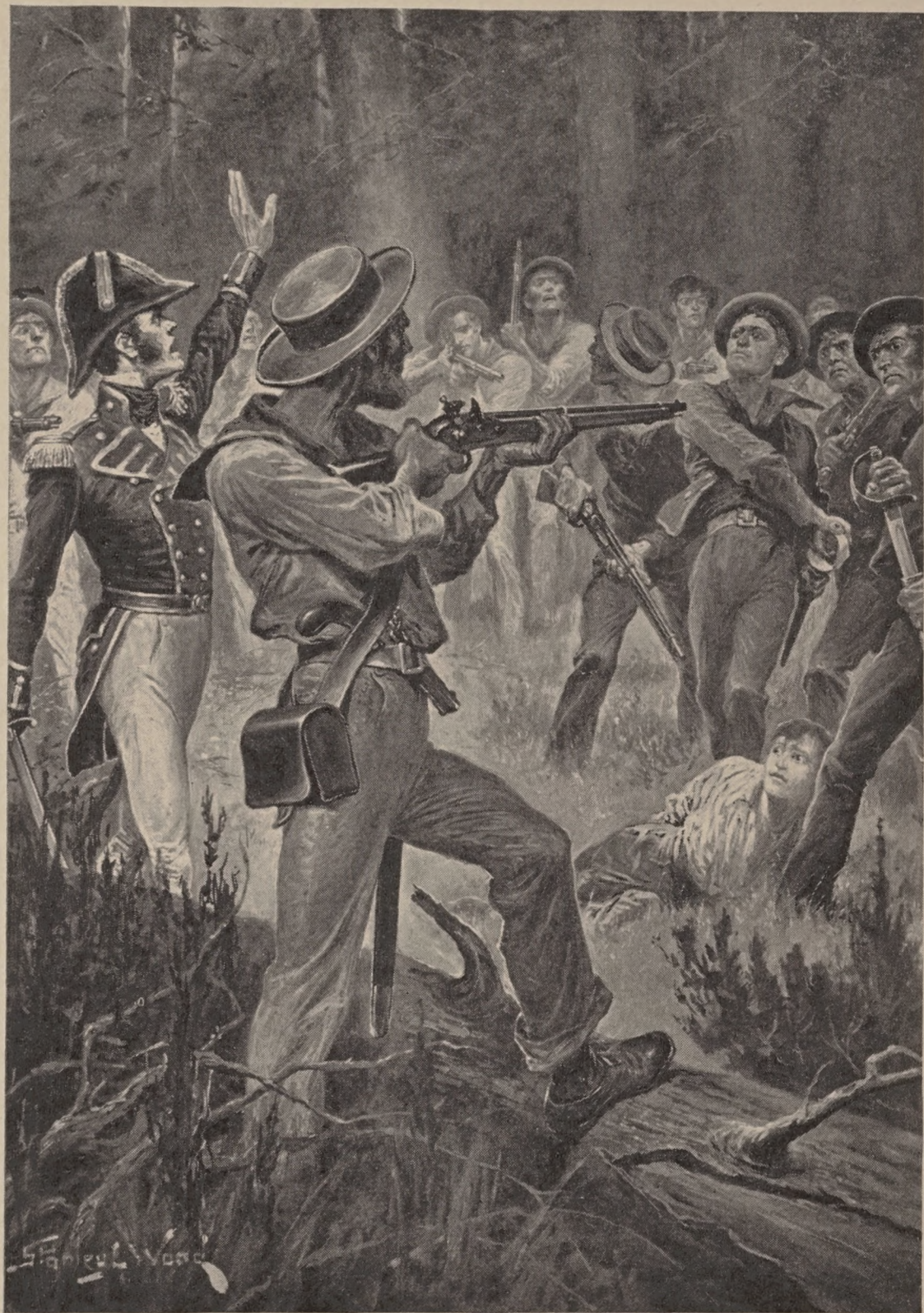
Before he could follow up his savage attack there was a call that seemed to come almost from the ground beneath them;—"Surrender, every one of you!"

The startled men looked up at the unexpected hail and instantly were aware that the place was surrounded by a force that numbered not less than twenty men. And the band was on every side! Escape was impossible although it was manifest that all four men were not inclined to give up easily. The number against them, however, was too great, and at a word from Dick, they threw down their arms in response to the demand that was made and stood looking stolidly into the faces of the men who now crowded about them.

It was Alexander Perry who ran quickly to aid Amos and cut the thongs that bound his hands. As soon as he was freed, Amos also became as interested a spectator in what was taking place as was his young companion.

There was no delay, however, for at the command of the leader of the men whom Alexander had succeeded in bringing from Presque Isle, the four British sailors were disarmed and compelled to march in the midst of the band, as it returned to the little settlement.

The march was uneventful and the four prisoners were safely delivered into the hands of the officers, who at once declared that they should be sent on to Niagara with the first force that returned to the army



"SURRENDER, EVERY ONE OF YOU!"—Page 294.



there. From Alexander, Amos learned that this was to occur the following day, and he was the more surprised, therefore, when word was sent him that night that one of the prisoners was desirous of speaking to him.

When Amos came into the room in which the Jackies were confined, he was not surprised when Dick, whom he had formerly known as "Amos" was found to be the man who wished to see him.

"I wanted to ask you," said the sailor, "if you know where your brother is?"

"No," replied Amos instantly aroused by the implied question. "I haven't seen him for days. Do you know where he is?"

"I think I do," replied the prisoner.

"Where is he?"

"I saw him three days ago—"

"Where is he?" broke in Amos unable to repress his excitement.

"Where, where?" demanded Amos as the man still hesitated.

"I think I'll not tell you just where I saw him. It might not do your heart any good to find that out. I don't know but that I was mistaken about it after all, but that was the reason why I asked permission to talk to you. It was your brother I saw, I am sure, now."

"Where?" again demanded Amos pleadingly.

"It was in a place where you'll join him very soon."

"Where, where?" repeated Amos.

"You just wait until the *Detroit* is finished and you won't have to ask me or any one else. When Commodore Barclay has the new brig,—it's almost ready now—he will be so much stronger than your Yankee tubs that he won't have to try any longer to keep you shut in here behind the bar at Presque Isle."

"Won't you tell me where he is?" pleaded Amos.

"I have told you almost all I know."

"You haven't told me where you saw him."

"Yes I did, I told you I saw him where I expect soon to see you and all the rest of these lubbers that Perry has with him."

"What is the name of the place?"

"You're a Yankee and I'll leave you to guess that," laughed the sailor.

Hopeless of receiving any information at the time, Amos angrily turned from the place, and as the following day the four men were sent to Niagara the boy's ignorance as to the whereabouts of Hiram was almost as complete as before. Somehow he was convinced that Dick really had seen him and if that was true the natural conclusion was that Hiram must be a prisoner somewhere on the opposite shore of Lake Erie. There was a slight comfort in the thought that Hiram had not fallen a victim to the red men who had been on their trail when first he had tried to make his way through the forests with Simeon and Sir Walter to join the force of Captain Perry at

Presque Isle. But the condition of the prisoners in the War of 1812 was not one to be envied on either side of the lake and Amos's heart was only in a measure relieved by the vague information he received.

The following day there was intense excitement in the little settlement when the report spread rapidly among the men that the British were planning to make a combined attack upon the place with their land and naval forces. Almost a panic followed the rumor and many of the people who were not bound to remain fled from the place. The disappearance of the fleet which Amos and others had discovered the preceding day, strengthened the belief of the anxious leader, but Captain Perry was not one to give way to his alarm. Unbeknown to his companions he had been suspicious of such an attempt being made and already he had sent word to Major-General David Mead to reinforce his men with the militia.

The day which followed was made memorable because soon after sunrise there was a salute of thirty-two guns from the Lawrence and it was soon known that General Mead was approaching.

The alarm changed to a measure of elation when it was reported that fifteen hundred soldiers were assembled at a rendezvous near Presque Isle. In addition, a regiment of Pennsylvania militia also were encamped near Fort Wayne and three long twelve-pounders were planted on the near-by bluffs.

The waters of Lake Erie remained unusually calm

for several days, but over its smooth surface not one of the British fleet came. The reported attack by land and sea evidently had been abandoned.

It was Sunday morning, the first day of August, 1813, when Captain Perry, now almost ready to begin his cruise, moved his entire flotilla down to the entrance of the harbor. His plan was to try to cross the bar early the morning following. He was in despair of having his force increased and the messages he had received from Commodore Chauncey, from the Secretary of the Navy, and from the men in command of the troops at Niagara and also in Ohio were of such a character that he decided no longer to hesitate. Alexander Perry was on board the *Lawrence* with his brother, but Amos Proper had been assigned to the little *Scorpion* of which Sailing-Master Champlin was in command.

It was confidently believed that while the American flotilla was attempting to cross the shallow waters that did not even conceal the long stretches of sand beneath it, Commodore Barclay's fleet would appear and attack Perry's flotilla while it was on the bar. Acting upon orders the commanders of the *Ariel* and *Scorpion* were sent out upon the lake and with orders to engage and detain the British Squadron, if it should appear.

What an opportunity Commodore Barclay lost that day! The famous sailor, who had shared with Nelson some of the honors of the great naval fight of Trafal-

gar, perhaps relied too much upon the reputation he had achieved, while his young enemy was aware that his name must yet be made. If the British Commodore had attacked Perry while his vessels were being floated over the bar, there can be no question that the result of the fight of Lake Erie would have been far different from what it was.

Captain Perry for four days scarcely slept or ate. He was expecting the enemy to appear any moment. And it was soon manifest that neither of his brigs could be floated over the bar without help. The smaller vessels of the squadron naturally had less difficulty and slipped across into the deeper waters of the lake without any material aid.

It was then that Captain Perry made use of a machine called a "camel," invented by the Dutch for the very purpose of carrying vessels over such shallow places as the entrance to the harbor at Presque Isle. This "camel" was a huge box or scow so arranged that water could be let into it or pumped out, as one desired. One of these camels was placed on each side of the *Lawrence*. The water was then let into the camels, which were so set that by the help of ropes under the keel and windlass the brig was held up, resting upon the camels. The water in the camels was then pumped out and as they floated, the brig, raised in the manner described, was slowly carried over the shallow places.

The process was long and tedious and the anxiety of

Captain Perry, as has been said, was increased by his fears as well as his expectation that his enemy would appear at any time while the Americans were in this helpless position.

It was some time afterward before it was learned that the British Commodore, who had planned to do the very thing that young Captain Perry expected him to do, had accepted an invitation for himself and his officers to a public dinner that the citizens of Fort Dover, a little Canadian village not far from Long Point, one of the rallying places of the British, had prepared for him.

Indeed the over-confident British Commodore is said to have spoken as follows in response to a toast at the dinner, "I expect to find the Yankee brigs holding fast on the bar at Erie, when I return, in which predicament it will be but a small job to destroy them."

If Barclay had acted as well as he planned, the story of Captain Oliver Hazard Perry would doubtless have been different from that which it soon became.

It is true the British fleet appeared off the bar a little later, but the American vessels then were all safely afloat on Lake Erie and the consequence was that Barclay decided to withdraw and not to chance an engagement until his new brig, the *Detroit*, should be complete and ready to assist in destroying Captain Perry's fleet of ten vessels.

## CHAPTER XXV

### A STRUGGLE ON THE WATER

THE days that followed were stirring and eventful for Amos Proper. When Perry's fleet had crossed the bar and the British flotilla appeared, the latter, as has been recorded in the preceding chapter, at once sailed away realizing that the golden opportunity of attacking the American vessels while they were being lightered over the shallow waters at the entrance to the bay was gone. Captain Barclay preferred not to chance an engagement at the time, as the Americans well understood, and departed to await the completion of his new brig,—the *Detroit*.

Aroused by the appearance of the enemy, Captain Perry, with all his energy, at once began to prepare his vessels for a cruise. He was not without hope of being able to overtake the fleeing ships of Barclay or of finding them in some harbor where he might attack them.

So vigorous was the response of Perry's devoted followers that when night fell that same day his fleet was ready to put to sea. A few recruits had been received within the past few days, but his entire force was still

less than four hundred men,—entirely inadequate to man properly his flotilla of ten vessels.

When the American squadron weighed anchor and began its first cruise on Lake Erie, it started toward the Canadian shore, the commander's plan being to approach Long Point where for some time the British had been assembling. Meanwhile the American militia, composed as it was of men who had enlisted for a brief time only and were eager to return to their homes in order to look after the August harvest fields, were now discharged by General Mead, and the people of Erie returned to their customary labors.

To Amos, the sailing of the fleet was a matter of intense interest. The days were fair and the wind held steady. The shallow waters of Lake Erie were easily lashed into fury even by a light wind that would not have caused as great results on Lake Ontario, but fortunately in the early days of the cruise there was nothing to mar the progress of the vessels, or to make the men anxious concerning their own safety.

Several days elapsed during which Captain Perry cruised back and forth between the American and the Canadian shores, searching for his enemy, but finding no trace of him. At last concluding that Captain Barclay had gone to Malden and was determined to await the completion of the *Detroit*, so that his force would be superior to that of the Americans, Captain Perry abandoned hope of immediately forcing his enemy into an engagement.

Meanwhile the hearts of the American sailors were made glad by some further additions to their own number. When they sailed back to Erie they found there Captain Elliot, who had brought with him from Niagara about one hundred officers and men of experience. The commander at once manned the *Niagara* and assigned the command of her to Captain Elliot. Strengthened in this way Perry soon decided to start up the lake and report to General Harrison that he was ready to coöperate with him.

Amos's excitement on the morning of the 12th of August, when the squadron once more left Erie was keen. In double column and with one line in regular battle order, the little fleet departed and finally found a rendezvous in a desirable harbor named Put-in-Bay. In this bay there were numerous little islands and it was the commander's thought that here not only would he find an excellent shelter, but a desirable hiding place, if one should be required. A better spot in which to enter into an engagement with his enemy was not to be found along the shores of the lake.

However, when the fleet arrived, no trace of the enemy was to be seen. The following day, when the afternoon sun sank low in the western sky, Captain Perry gave orders for the squadron to weigh anchor and to sail for Sandusky Bay. Most of the fleet had found shelter within the quiet waters of this bay, when to Amos's delight orders were received by Sail-

ing-Master Champlin, who as we know was the commander of the *Scorpion*, to remain outside and act as a scout.

That the precaution was wisely made, soon became manifest when far away a small sailing vessel was seen.

The *Scorpion* at once started toward the stranger, who did not appear to be at all alarmed by the appearance of the little American vessel. Convinced, after a time, that his suspicions were not well grounded, and yet not entirely willing to withdraw until he knew more concerning the sail which had been sighted, Captain Champlin ordered a small yawl to be manned and for the men to row to the little schooner in the distance and ascertain who and what she was. Meanwhile, as if to allay any fears that might have been aroused, he withdrew the *Scorpion* from the vicinity telling the men in the yawl that he would return in case of danger, and be ready to receive them on board when they had paid their visit to the stranger.

The recent addition of the men to the American fleet had aroused the hope and courage of every man. Amos Proper was sharing in the eagerness that appeared in every crew. His delight was great when he was ordered to be one of the four men to take his place in the yawl. For a time his anxiety for Hiram and the mystery of the missing Simeon and Sir Walter were forgotten or ignored. The new experience was

thoroughly novel and like all healthy boys, he was interested in what is unusual.

With his companions he pulled steadily until the *Scorpion* seemed to be almost as far distant as the schooner which had been sighted.

The exploring party, however, soon discovered that a boat had been put off the schooner and was coming to meet them. The discovery instantly aroused the interest of all four men and at the word of one of the crew they increased the speed at which they were moving.

They had not advanced far before they were aware that the approaching yawl was manned by six men. The two little boats now were rapidly approaching each other and as the distance between them became less, the interest of all arose accordingly. Nearer and nearer approached the yawls until at last they were within hailing distance.

“Look at the bow of that yawl!” in a low voice said one of Amos’s companions.

Amos turned quickly about in his seat and glanced at the bow which now was not more than fifty yards distant. He was startled when he saw a little brass cannon shining in the sunlight and plainly mounted for use. It was manifest at once that the approaching party, whatever it might be, was better prepared to assert their rights than were the men in the American yawl, who were armed only with pistols. It was too late, however, to turn back, and striving to

maintain an air of boldness, which all were far from feeling, the yawl was driven forward until at last it was so near the approaching party that the two crews could easily converse with each other.

“Who are you?” demanded the leader in Amos’s boat as he rose and looked toward the men in the other yawl. “What boat is that?”

“It doesn’t make any difference what boat it is,” replied one of the men in the other yawl, as he arose and answered the hail. “We have come out here to make all of you Yankees our prisoners, and that’s what you are!”

Astonished at the unexpected demand, Amos’s face became colorless, and he was quickly aware that his companions were almost as greatly startled as was he.

Not a word was spoken, however, and in a brief time the leader of the other boat repeated his demand.

“We’ll sink your tub if you don’t give up without a fight! We can send every one of you to Davy Jones, and the only thing for you to do is to let us take you in tow peaceably.”

“You can’t scare us with any of your popguns,” retorted the American leader; and instantly he turned and directed his companions to start back to the *Scorpion*, which now could barely be seen in the distance.

The action of the American sailors instantly caused their enemies, for it was now manifest that the men belonged to some British man-of-war, to start in pursuit. The little cannon, however, was not fired and

though one or two pistols were discharged, no one was hurt.

"We'll save our pistols until later," said the American leader grimly to his comrades. "Just now we'll put every ounce of muscle we have got into these oars."

No race between two college crews was ever more exciting than that which now followed. The wind had died away and the only sound in either boat was that of the oars.

Amos Proper was pulling as if life itself depended upon his efforts. He was aware that the perspiration was rolling down the faces of his companions, that their veins stood out on their foreheads in their endeavors and it was not long before his hands were blistered and sore, but still the men rowed on and on.

"They are gaining, Amos, they're gaining!" groaned Amos's companion as he looked anxiously at the pursuing boat. Amos made no response except to close his mouth more decidedly and to try to put fresh strength into his efforts.

For a time the Americans apparently held their own. They had not gone far, however, before the pursuing yawl could be more distinctly seen. But the boat still sped forward. The surface of the lake was almost like glass, and with every passing moment the air was becoming more hot and sultry.

"Not yet, my hearties!" said one of Amos's com-

panions as a puff of smoke arose from the other yawl and the report of a pistol again was heard. "Maybe we'll heave to a little later, but not just yet."

The ball had gone wide of its mark, but Amos well knew that it was only a question of a short time before they must be overtaken. Still he rowed on, looking occasionally toward the far-away *Scorpion* and hoping that their predicament might be discovered and that some aid would appear.

The little gunboat, however, was still too far out in the lake to be aware of what was occurring. If a good breeze should rise, as the yawl in which Amos was rowing was also provided with a sail, they might be helped. But not a puff of wind came across the motionless water. Everything seemed to be against the men, and foot by foot the pursuing yawl crept nearer and nearer.

Again a puff of smoke arose and this time the pistol ball struck the water so near them that the young Americans were aware that not only were they within range, but that soon some of them might be hit.

"The game's up, boys," said Amos's comrade. "No wind, no help, no anything! We're just run down like a woodchuck chased by a dog. I don't want your blood on my hands. We'll stop," the man added, and his companions, panting and breathless, obeyed.

A shout now could be heard from the men in the

other yawl and in a brief time they drew alongside the little boat.

"You're my prisoners!" exclaimed the young ensign as he stepped into the yawl of the Yankees.

"That's no news," growled one of the men sulkily in reply, as the young sailor ordered three of his men to follow him into the captured yawl.

Disheartened as Amos was by the capture he grimly thought that it was one of the fortunes of war and that he must bear it as his companions were doing. He watched the young ensign, happy in his first capture, and his anger increased. The prospect of being shut up in a British prison was not pleasing, but what could be done to prevent it? Apparently nothing. The captors were armed. The Yankees' pistols had been given up when the ensign slipped on board their yawl and not more than a mile away was the British gunboat, while the little Scorpion was at least twice as far distant in the opposite direction.

Amos said nothing, however, and took his seat beside one of his fellow prisoners and watched the men who had come on board.

"There's no wind," said the ensign, "but we're in no special hurry, men. These fellows won't run away and it will be cooler soon. The sun is setting now."

Amos glanced at the western sky and saw that the sun indeed had disappeared, but he also was aware that the schooner was slowly coming about and

that in all possibilities he and his companions would be taken on board. The lad felt almost desperate enough to enter single-handed into a contest with his captors, but a glance at their pistols and the cutlasses with which they were armed showed him only too clearly the folly of any such attempt. Apparently nothing could be done, and Amos was almost in despair.

"There's a breath of air!" said the ensign rising for a moment. "If the wind starts up we'll use the sail too."

Meanwhile the yawl in which their captors had come was now returning to the schooner.

Apparently the young ensign had not been fearful that the Yankee prisoners would rebel, inasmuch as there were as many of the captors now on the yawl as there were prisoners, and the former were armed while the latter were not.

Far out on the lake there was a puff of wind, which capped the waves with white. It could plainly be seen even in the dusk, but still Amos did not believe it was going to blow hard.

He was aware that the young ensign was standing directly behind him now inspecting the sail. Suddenly and without a moment's warning Amos turned and with one strong push sent the lieutenant overboard.

As the man fell with a splash into the lake Amos turned again and seized a belaying pin shouting,

"Come on, boys!" and stretched the nearest sailor senseless on the bottom of the yawl.

Quickly the little boat became a scene of intense confusion. Amos's startled companions required no encouragement and instantly entered into the struggle. The advantage of numbers was with them now, the ensign having succeeded only in grasping the rudder with his hand and as yet had not been able to scramble on board. A blow from a cutlass fell upon the shoulder of Amos's nearest companion.

Shouts and calls arose as the men struggled desperately for the control of the little boat. Now up, now down, now almost into the water, and then held back against the boom, the men fought in their fierce contest.

What the Americans had desired most of all was to prevent their enemies from drawing their pistols or wielding the cutlasses. With the help of one of his fellows Amos succeeded in binding the arms of the man that he had been struggling with, and was about to turn to the aid of the others who were holding the remaining sailor on the bottom of the boat. Suddenly above the noise of the contest a call came from the other little yawl, which was speedily followed by a second shout. When Amos looked up quickly, he was aware that the boat was returning, the three sailors apparently not being able to understand how their comrades had been worsted.

Oh, for a breath of wind! The dusk had now

deepened until neither the schooner nor the yawl could be distinctly seen. The wind had risen slightly, but was still far from being of much aid. However, as the captors had now been secured and as the dusk was deepening until it was only a matter of a few minutes before neither the gunboat nor the yawl could be seen, the young sailors turned quickly to hoist their sail. At any moment their enemies in the other yawl might be upon them, and not only would the struggle then be useless, but the condition of the prisoners would be far worse than before. The young ensign was still swimming about in the water, one sailor was helpless from the blow which he had received and the other two were fast bound. If there was only a good breeze the Americans were confident that they might get away, taking their prisoners with them.

"They are following us," said one of the men quickly. "I can hear their oars! We might make these fellows take a hand too," he added as he indicated the prisoners whose hands had been tied.

The suggestion was instantly acted upon. Sulkily the British sailors one by one obeyed the command which was given them to assist in the efforts to escape, and with the Americans rowing desperately the yawl was headed in the direction where it was supposed the *Scorpion* was waiting for them.

The men labored for half an hour, exerting all their strength and without stopping for a rest, or

even to look about them for their pursuers. At the suggestion of one of the number they then rested a moment on their oars, as a faint shout came across the waters.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### A MAN IN A BOAT

“WHAT’S that?” said the leader in a low voice when the faint sound first was heard. The men were not rowing now and while they were listening intently the sound was repeated. It was impossible at first to tell from which direction it came, but a moment later Amos said quickly, “It’s off to the starboard!”

“Then it’s from the *Scorpion*!” said one of the men. “We’re not far from the schooner now.”

“We’ll give them an answer,” suggested another, and at his word all four men united in a shout that must have been heard far away.

The call was answered and this time there was no difficulty in determining the direction from which it came. Without doubt the call was from their friends, they thought, and the *Scorpion* must be somewhere in the immediate vicinity. The wind had increased slightly by this time, and the sky was darkened by clouds, but as there was no light from the stars, it was impossible to see far in advance of them.

With renewed vigor, the men once more gave way

and the little yawl was sent speedily in the direction where it was believed the *Scorpion* was waiting their return.

“Look out for tricks, men!” suggested the leader. “We don’t want those British Jackies to cut us off. Keep a sharp out-look!”

In the dim light the outlines of the *Scorpion* loomed large and dark in their pathway. It required but a few moments to bring the yawl alongside and for the men to clamber to the deck.

They had hailed the watch so that there had been no fear of their being mistaken for an approaching enemy and as soon as they were among their companions Captain Champlin at once approached and said, “What did you find?”

“It’s one of Barclay’s fleet,” replied the leader touching his cap.

“What is she?”

“Schooner, sir. We ran foul of a yawl full of British Jackies that was coming out to see who we were. Sam, here, had a bit of a mishap,” he added as he pointed to the man who was struck on the shoulder by the cutlass of one of the British sailors.

Sharply ordering that the wounded man should be taken below, Captain Champlin then said excitedly, “Where is she now?”

“Over yonder behind those islands,” replied the sailor.

“Can we run her down in this light?”

"We can try it, sir."

"Very good. We'll start on her tracks right away. Meanwhile I want one of you men to go with a yawl and tell Captain Perry what you have found. Tell him too that we have started in pursuit of the schooner."

Turning then to Amos the captain said, "I'll send you with the men. I know you are pretty well worn out, but you can steer the boat and I'll send some other men to do the rowing."

Elated as Amos was by his selection for the duty, he soon found himself once more on board the yawl looking into the faces of four men, who were rowing, and was well started on his way before he fully realized what had occurred.

He heard the creaking of the *Scorpion's* rigging as her course was changed, but in a brief time she was no longer to be seen in the dim light.

A half hour later Amos was on board the *Lawrence* telling his message to Captain Perry. To his surprise the energetic young leader instantly issued orders for his entire fleet to join in the pursuit of the schooner for which the *Scorpion* was searching.

As soon as the vessels were under way, Amos, who was standing by the rail looking out over the dark waters, was startled when a hand was placed on his shoulder and he heard young Alexander Perry say to him, "Did you bring that message?"

"Yes."

“We’ll get that British schooner! We’ll show those British tars that they can’t try any such tricks as that on us. My brother says she was reconnoitering, trying to find out just where our fleet was. We’ll show them that without any more trouble on their part.”

“I’m afraid not to-night,” said Amos as he glanced at the sky. “It’s raining now.”

It was not long before the lad’s words proved to be true, for a heavy storm broke upon the lake. It was impossible to see far in advance and as Captain Perry was by no means sure of the winding channels, the search for the British schooner was soon abandoned.

The little *Scorpion*, meanwhile, had run fast aground, but without knowing that the schooner for which she had been searching had grounded also on another island not far away.

The following morning after some labor the *Scorpion* was once more afloat and the crew were all rejoiced when they had been informed that she had suffered no serious damage.

The fleet on the following morning sailed for Sandusky Point. Great was the confusion on board when the cannon of the *Lawrence* boomed their noisy challenges, as it was supposed, to the enemy. In a brief time, however, it was learned that Captain Perry’s plan was not to announce the location of his fleet to the British commodore, but by the signal

previously arranged, to inform General Harrison, who with his army of some 8,000 men was not far away, that the fleet was in the bay and ready to act in connection with the army.

Aware that startling events were likely to follow soon, the excitement of Amos and the crew became keen when not long after the salute had been fired, Colonel Gains, accompanied by a few officials and several Indian chiefs, were received on board the *Lawrence*. The interest of the dark-skinned warriors was manifest only in the keen glances they cast about the deck and at the sailors that were curiously regarding them.

The interview, however, was brief as the colonel simply came in response to the summons to announce that General Harrison and his army were only twenty-seven miles away, where they were awaiting the coming of the fleet.

Captain Perry immediately dispatched several boats to bring the general and his suite on board. Darkness had slipped over the waters when the general arrived and a heavy rain was falling. But the crews still were able to see the tall, wiry form of the leader of the troops. With him were several of his staff officers, together with a number of soldiers and twenty-six Indian braves. It was not until afterward that Amos learned that the Indians had been brought because of the general's desire to recognize them as loyal friends, and also to impress upon their

minds the strength of the American fleet. As the red men glanced quickly and with manifest interest about them, Amos and Alexander, who had remained together, were keen observers of their actions.

The interview soon was ended and as the larger part of the officers were about to depart, Amos suddenly uttered an exclamation and rushed forward to one of the young soldiers, whom he touched upon the shoulder. As the young man turned sharply about, Amos found himself standing face to face with his lost friend, Sir Walter.

"What are you doing here?" demanded the young soldier.

"Where is Hiram?" was Amos's response.

"I don't know."

"What became of him? Was he shot? Did the Indians get him?"

"I cannot tell you. We left that place where you were with us not very long after you started. The Indians began to get noisy and before sunrise we agreed that our best plan was to start, each man for himself, and try to make his way through the woods to Presque Isle, or any other place where our men were."

"Did you do it?"

"It looks as if I did," replied Sir Walter with a laugh. "I had my troubles and lost my way, but I managed to get through somehow, and found myself at last out here with the army of General Harrison."

"Don't you know what became of Hiram?"

"No."

"Did Simeon get away?"

"He started and that's all I can tell you."

"Haven't you heard anything about either of them?"

"Not a word." Sir Walter's voice betrayed the sympathy he felt for Amos and all of the importance of manner he had assumed in his former conversations with the lad was not to be seen.

However, as he was compelled to depart with his companions from the *Lawrence*, and find some sheltered place on the shore, there was no opportunity for further conversation at the time and the anxiety which had fallen on the heart of Amos Proper remained in full force.

It was long that night before the troubled lad fell asleep in his hammock. The rumor which he had received that Hiram was somewhere a prisoner on the British side of the lake afforded a measure of comfort in that it implied that his brother was still alive.

The story of Sir Walter increased Amos's perplexity. How it was possible for Hiram to gain the opposite side of the lake was a problem for which he found no solution. The fact, too, that nothing had been heard of Simeon increased his fears for both. What chance had either of them of successfully mak-

ing his way through the great forests where so many hostile Indians were to be found?

The following morning the sun rose clear and bright. The crews of the fleet were busy and Amos Proper was compelled to take his share in the duties that kept the men busy through the hours. He had returned to his place on the *Scorpion* now, and the entire squadron was busy throughout the day in reconnoitering Put-in-Bay. It was understood that the plan of the leaders was to bring the army there and that the soldiers would be carried across the lake to Malden.

When General Harrison returned to his camp he soon sent word that he was not quite ready for the proposed forward movement. Captain Perry, however, was unable to remain quiet and at once sailed toward Malden hoping to find out more than he then knew concerning the British fleet which he supposed had sailed for that place.

The enthusiasm in the American fleet was great when Barclay's ships were discovered within the mouth of the Detroit River! It was soon manifest that the new brig had not yet joined the squadron and Captain Perry instantly decided to strike the fleet a blow.

His purpose was to attack the British at once, trusting to the fact that the *Detroit* had not yet come to their aid.

His plan, however, was thwarted because of the heavy winds which began to blow and continued for several days. It was impossible for him to do what he wished under such conditions.

The tireless young commander just at this time also became severely ill, as did also young Alexander and many of the crew. As a consequence the engagement was abandoned for a time and the fleet returned once more to Put-in-Bay.

A few days afterward, the energetic captain gave orders for another cruise and the first day of September the squadron again weighed anchor and sailed for Malden, but the British were not yet ready to respond to the challenge. Under the batteries of the shore they were lying secure and safe. Captain Barclay manifestly did not intend to take any undue chances, much as he pretended to despise the weakness of his enemies. He still was waiting for the coming of his new brig!

The following morning, confident that there was no hope of a battle, Captain Perry sailed again for Sandusky Bay, where he had another interview with General Harrison and then with his entire squadron departed for Put-in-Bay where the fleet came to anchor.

There was disappointment among his men and some were inclined to complain at what they were pleased to call his lack of action, but the young Rhode Island sailor was biding his time and reserving his

strength for the effort which he was soon to make.

The days that followed were somewhat monotonous and though their captain was doing his utmost to keep his men busy, Amos Proper and others were beginning to feel that the complaints of the sailors were not without some just cause.

Alexander Perry meanwhile had recovered from his illness and one morning was standing beside Amos on the deck of the *Scorpion* watching the approach of a little sailboat, which was rapidly rounding the point of Put-in-Bay Island.

"I didn't see that boat go out, did you?" inquired Alexander.

"No," answered Amos. "What do you think it is?"

"I don't know. It seems strange that a boat like that should be coming head on, as she is, without having been held up by any of our scouts. I am sure she doesn't belong to our fleet."

"I don't see how you can be so sure of that."

"'Sure of it?'" laughed Alexander. "There aren't so many boats here that it is much of a job to count them up, and I know there isn't any such craft as that which belongs in Put-in-Bay."

"She's headed for us, anyway," suggested Amos after he had looked long at the little boat, which was tipping before the wind as if she was in danger of capsizing.

Both boys were silent for a time as they watched the maneuvers of the one man who was to be seen on board the approaching boat.

It was plain too that other members of the crew were interested now in the stranger and several of the sailors joined Amos and Alexander by the rail.

"That fellow knows how to handle a boat," said Alexander as the skipper suddenly brought his boat up into the wind and quickly took in his sail. "Don't you think so?" he added as he turned to look at Amos.

But his companion was silent. Amos was staring at the man in the little boat as if he could not believe what he saw.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Alexander with a laugh as he saw that his friend was not listening. "What's the matter with you?" he repeated. "You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"I have," said Amos quickly. "It's either a ghost or else it's my brother, Hiram."

"I didn't know you had a brother," said Alexander. "But if this is the man he's no ghost let me tell you. He's alive, every inch of him!"

Regardless of the discipline of the *Scorpion*, Amos, no longer able to restrain his feelings, shouted, "Hiram! Hiram! Come aboard, Hi."

The young sailor glanced quickly up, stared a moment at the one who had hailed him and then seizing the long oar guided his little craft before the

wind until she was alongside the *Scorpion*. Then hastily seizing the rope which was thrown him, he made it fast and calling upon the men on deck to "Hold on," he clambered to the deck.

In a moment Amos rushed upon his brother and despite the fact that affection was not often displayed in those rugged days, he flung his arm about Hiram's neck. "It's you!" he almost shouted. "It's Hiram! Where did you come from?"

"I came from Malden," replied Hiram as he withdrew his brother's arm. "If you don't stop choking me, I shall almost wish that I had stayed there."

The crew now were crowding about the brothers, staring at the stranger and aware that some matter of great importance had occurred though no one was able to explain exactly what it was.

The group separated, however, when Captain Champlin quickly approached and at once spoke to the stranger.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### SAIL HO!

IN response to the captain's request Hiram briefly explained who he was and then simply stated the fact that he had just come from Malden, having escaped from the British fleet.

"What can you tell me about conditions there?" demanded Captain Champlin as he looked keenly at the young sailor.

"They are short of rations," said Hiram. "Yes, and they're short of a good many other things, too," he added.

"How do you know?" inquired the captain quickly.

"I heard the men say so, and I know the prisoners weren't fed very much, and it was common talk that Barclay was intending to make for the lake no matter what happened because he could not stay any longer where he was, without supplies."

"Where did he intend to go?"

"It was said he was trying to get into communication with Long Point."

Captain Champlin nodded his head, for he was

aware, as were also his men, that this little place on the Detroit River was the chief deposit of supplies for the British forces.

“I want you,” said the captain, “to come with me and we’ll report to Captain Perry what you have told me.”

Accordingly, before the brothers had any opportunity for further conversation, or Amos was able even to inquire how Hiram had escaped from the enemy, the young commander, accompanied by Hiram, at once departed for the *Lawrence*.

Captain Perry, interested but not surprised by the information which was brought him, asked many questions of Hiram to which the young sailor replied as best he was able. He was not aware that the American commander had already been informed by young Lieutenant Brevoort of the difficulties under which the British commander was laboring. The reports of the desperate condition of the fleet, due to its lack of provisions and other supplies had been brought by the young lieutenant, and Captain Perry already was making his plans in accordance with the information he had received.

At once on a high point of Gibraltar Island\* he stationed a look-out and the watch was maintained day and night; indeed, there were many hours when the young commander himself took his glass and sat beside the look-out anxiously watching for the com-

\* Afterward called Perry’s Look-Out.

ing of the British fleet from the direction in which Malden was located.

Still the days came and went without any appearance of the British fleet. Captain Perry, not yet fully recovered from his illness, and his face still betraying the fact of his suffering, was busy most of the hours, every day and night. In spite of the impatience at the delay and the reaction among his men, as they were compelled to wait for the beginning of the fight which they were told was soon to occur, Captain Perry had not changed his plans in the slightest degree.

However, convinced that his enemy was not able to remain much longer in his place of refuge, the American commander on the evening of the 9th of September, summoned all the officers of his squadron and after a long interview gave every one his instructions in writing, just how he was to attack the enemy.

The captain's plan was to force a close action, if possible, and in his carefully formed designs, over which he had spent much time and labor, he told every man just who his antagonist on the British side was to be. His information concerning the size and strength of the passing fleet had been obtained from the same young Lieutenant Brevoort, who, as well as Hiram Proper, had reported concerning these matters.

The *Lawrence*, which was to be the flagship, was

assigned to attack the *Detroit*, the new brig which was now completed, and had joined Barclay's fleet. The *Niagara* was to attack the *Queen Charlotte*. To every officer Captain Perry said, "Keep on the line, if it is possible, at half a cable length from the vessel of our squadron which is ahead of you, and engage your antagonist in close action."

The conference had lasted until ten o'clock in the evening. As it was about to disperse and the men were assembled on the deck of the *Lawrence*, they were aware that it was a glorious night. The sky seemed to be filled with myriads of stars and the moon was at its full, so that the waters of the little bay sparkled in the moonlight, almost as if it were midday.

Just as they were about to leave the ship, suddenly the young captain brought out a large square battle flag, and showed it to his commanders. This flag was between eight and nine feet long. The ground of it was blue, but it was not its size or color that called forth the cheers of the men. In the centre of the flag in letters of white muslin, each of which was at least a foot in length, was the stirring command of the dying *Lawrence*, for whom the flagship on Lake Erie had been named,—DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP.

For a moment the men were silent, as the gentle breeze spread the great flag, but the reaction came instantly and cheer after cheer arose from the men,

in which the crew of the flag-ship also joined. Responding cheers came from the other vessels of the fleet, although apparently no one knew what the cause of the excitement was.

The young leader, as strongly excited as his men, turned to his companions as they were about to depart, and said, "When this flag shall be hoisted to the main-royal mast-head, it shall be your signal for going into action." Again the cheers came from the little assembly in response to the stirring words of their leader and then Captain Perry continued, "Gentlemen, remember your instructions! Nelson has expressed my idea in the words, 'if you lay your enemy close alongside you cannot be out of your place.' Good-night."

In addition to the watch which had been established on Gibraltar Island, the little *Scorpion*, and her companion, the *Ariel*, had been sent to cruise outside the Sister Islands with instructions to keep an additional look-out for the approach of Barclay's fleet.

Not a vessel had yet been seen; but the men now, as well as their commander, were convinced that the moment for which they had been working and waiting through the long weeks of the spring and summer was almost at hand, as indeed it was.

The following morning, the famous September 10th, 1813, had not yet become clear when the long expected cry of "Sail ho!" was heard from the mast-

head of the *Lawrence*. Instantly the excitement in the fleet became intense.

When the signals to the fleet of "Enemy in sight," "Get under weigh," were given every man knew that the time of action was not far distant. The calls of the boatswains were heard throughout the squadron. "All hands up anchor! Ahoy!" On the deck of every vessel there was a scene of intense activity. So careful had been the preparations which had been made that not much labor was now required and in a brief time the fleet was ready to put to sea.

The sun had just risen above the eastern horizon when far away on Lake Erie, as the men looked to the northwest, they saw the tiny sails of Captain Barclay's squadron.

Six vessels composed the British fleet. Although Perry's ships outnumbered the enemy, the British had more and much heavier guns. Indeed, Captain Barclay is said to have had fifty-five long guns, while Perry had only fifteen.

Captain Perry understood fully that in close action lay almost his only hope. The numbers engaged in battle were not entirely unequal although the enemy had a few more men than had the Americans.

One of the unusual sights to be seen on the decks of the ships of Captain Barclay was that of Indians serving as sailors. Although nearly half of Barclay's crew was composed of regular soldiers, they

were not entirely without experience on the water. What the British commander lacked in the way of experienced sailors was more than atoned for by the fact that among his followers were at least one hundred and fifty men from the royal navy, who had had long experience under the ablest naval commanders, at that time, in the world.

When the British vessels were first sighted there was a light wind blowing from the southwest. After a little while this steady wind drove the clouds, that had formed over the great forests of Ohio, across the lake and a gentle rain began to fall. However, the rain soon ceased and when Perry's squadron had passed out from the many islands in the bay not a cloud was to be seen in the sky, while the waters were clear and sparkling. It was a wonderful morning, but the clearness of the air and the sunshine were forgotten by Amos Proper and his companions when the sturdy little fleet set forth to meet its enemies.

Again the cry of "Sail ho!" was heard. The young Rhode Island captain, still weak and pale from the illness from which he had been suffering, apparently forgot his ailments in the excitement of the hour.

The wind now increased and he tried at once to gain the weather gage by beating around to the windward of some of the islands. Now that the moment for which he had long been waiting had come, he was

keen for the battle; but the wind was so light that his first orders were impossible to execute.

"Run to the leeward of the islands," ordered the commander of his sailing-master.

"Then you will have to engage the enemy to the leeward," replied the officer, not attempting to dispute the command though he ventured mildly to protest against what seemed to him a mistake.

"I don't care," quickly responded Captain Perry, "TO WINDWARD OR TO LEEWARD, THEY SHALL FIGHT TO-DAY!"

The command to hoist the signal for the fleet to wear ship was at once given, but the little squadron had scarcely cleared from the island when the fickle wind suddenly shifted to the southeast, thus enabling the fleet not only to clear the islands easily, but also to keep the weather-gage.

The British commander, aware of the advantage which his enemy had secured by this maneuver, instead of sailing onward to meet their approach, hove to in close order and awaited the coming of the American fighter.

When the outlines of the British ships became more distinct it was an imposing appearance which they presented. The vessels had been freshly painted, and the flying colors and the manifest power of the little squadron produced a deep impression upon the American sailors.

Indeed, Amos Proper found that he was trembling

as he gazed long at the imposing sight. Nor were his fears without reason. Of the four hundred and ninety men in Perry's fleet, it was known that one hundred and sixteen were sick,—almost every one of the ailing sailors being unable to make his way to the deck. Almost a quarter of the number, too, was composed of negroes, while another quarter was made up of volunteers, chiefly from Kentucky, who naturally were without experience as sailors on great bodies of water.

The plan, which Captain Perry had outlined in his interview with his officers the preceding evening, was now carried out in forming the line. The *Niagara* was in the van, when the *Lawrence*, which was the flag-ship, as we know, was cleared for action. The great blue battle flag, with its marvelously inspiring motto, "Don't Give up the Ship" was now displayed. The reason why Captain Perry had used such large letters in the wording now was manifest, for the last words of the dying Captain Lawrence could be seen by every man in the entire squadron.

On board the *Lawrence* there was a stirring scene, when the young captain called his men and officers together and briefly urged them to be true to their country, to the fleet and to themselves. He then said, "My brave lads, this flag contains the last words of Captain Lawrence. Shall I hoist it?"

"Aye, aye, sir," his eager men all shouted; and in a moment it was run up to the main-royal mast-head

of the ship named for the heroic captain who had lost his life in the naval battle with the *Shannon*.

The excitement increased when the cheers from the deck of the *Lawrence* were answered by wild shouts, cries and cheers from the deck of every ship in the line. The men were ready for action. It was manifest that Captain Perry could depend upon the courage and determination of his followers.

In spite of his eagerness to enter into an immediate engagement, the shrewdness of the young commander prevented him. He was aware that the fight, in all probabilities, would continue for a long time and that before the battle was ended, the dinner-hour would have long been passed. Accordingly he ordered rations to be served at once to every crew. How much these previsions, as well as the provisions, had to do with the outcome, perhaps no one can say, but at all events it was a wise precaution on the part of the zealous young Rhode Islander.

Directly afterward the crews were ordered to flood the decks, which were then sprinkled with sand. Amos Proper, inexperienced in the work, turned to the other sailors on the deck of the *Scorpion*, when they were engaged in this task and inquired, "What are we doing this for? Does the Captain think our feet will slip?"

The sailor looked at the boy almost pityingly and replied, "The decks will be slippery enough, my lad, before we're done with those Jackies to-day."

Amos's pale face became still paler as he understood what was implied, but he asked no further questions. It was plain even to the boy that serious work was just ahead.

For a moment he thought of his home on the far-away shore of Lake Ontario, and there was a lump in his throat, as he had a vision of his mother and his sister Prudy. Would he ever see them again? How many of the crew were likely to come through an engagement, which, aware as he was of Captain Perry's spirit, he knew would not be a light one? He wished that Hiram was with him. There would be strength and comfort in the presence of his elder brother, but Hiram had not returned or had not been sent back to the *Scorpion*, and Amos could only conjecture that he still was on board the *Lawrence*.

The thought reminded him of young Alexander Perry. The knowledge which the boy possessed of matters pertaining to the navy had been a source of surprise to Amos and now he was wondering if in his first experience in a real naval engagement, he was suffering from any such fears as were sweeping over him. But Amos Proper was no coward. His voice, when cheers were given, was among the loudest, and his hands, though they trembled, never for a moment relaxed their grasp upon any of the cables he was called upon to handle.

The American squadron was now moving forward under a gentle breeze at less than three knots an

hour. The very silence itself was impressive, as the men of the two hostile fleets waited for the battle, which every one believed would be terrible, to begin.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE

IT was a quarter of an hour or more afterward when the tension of the sailors and the silence that rested over the beautiful lake found a slight relief. To the men waiting for action the long silence and the breathless and unbroken watch maintained upon the movements of the enemy's fleet were harder to bear than the thoughts of the struggle into which they were about to enter.

Suddenly, at this moment from the deck of the *Detroit* the clear note of a bugle sounded and was heard by the crew of every vessel. There was something sweet as well as tragic in the smooth-toned notes that reached the ears of those determined men. It was the signal for action! The sound had scarcely died away, before all the bands of the British fleet struck up the tune to which every Englishman everywhere always responds, "Rule, Britannia."

The music of the bands soon stopped and was followed by the cheers of the crews; and as the American sailors were not at all slow in their responses, and as their own cheers and shouts were mingled with those that came across the waters there was

something in the experience that stirred the heart of even Amos Proper, who was almost the youngest member of his crew.

There was just a brief breathing spell after the shouts had died away and then there was a boom from the deck of the *Detroit* as the flag-ship fired a twenty-four pound shot at the approaching *Lawrence*.

The American fleet, however, was at least a mile and a half distant and when the shot fell short, a loud and derisive shout arose from the men on the deck of the American flagship. The act had startled every man into action, and tense muscles and strained expressions of faces were to be seen on every side.

"Steady, boys, steady!" called Captain Perry, who was not much more than a boy himself.

When his men turned to look at him, they saw that his dark eyes were glowing under the excitement that possessed him, though it still was not strong enough to overcome his cool and better judgment.

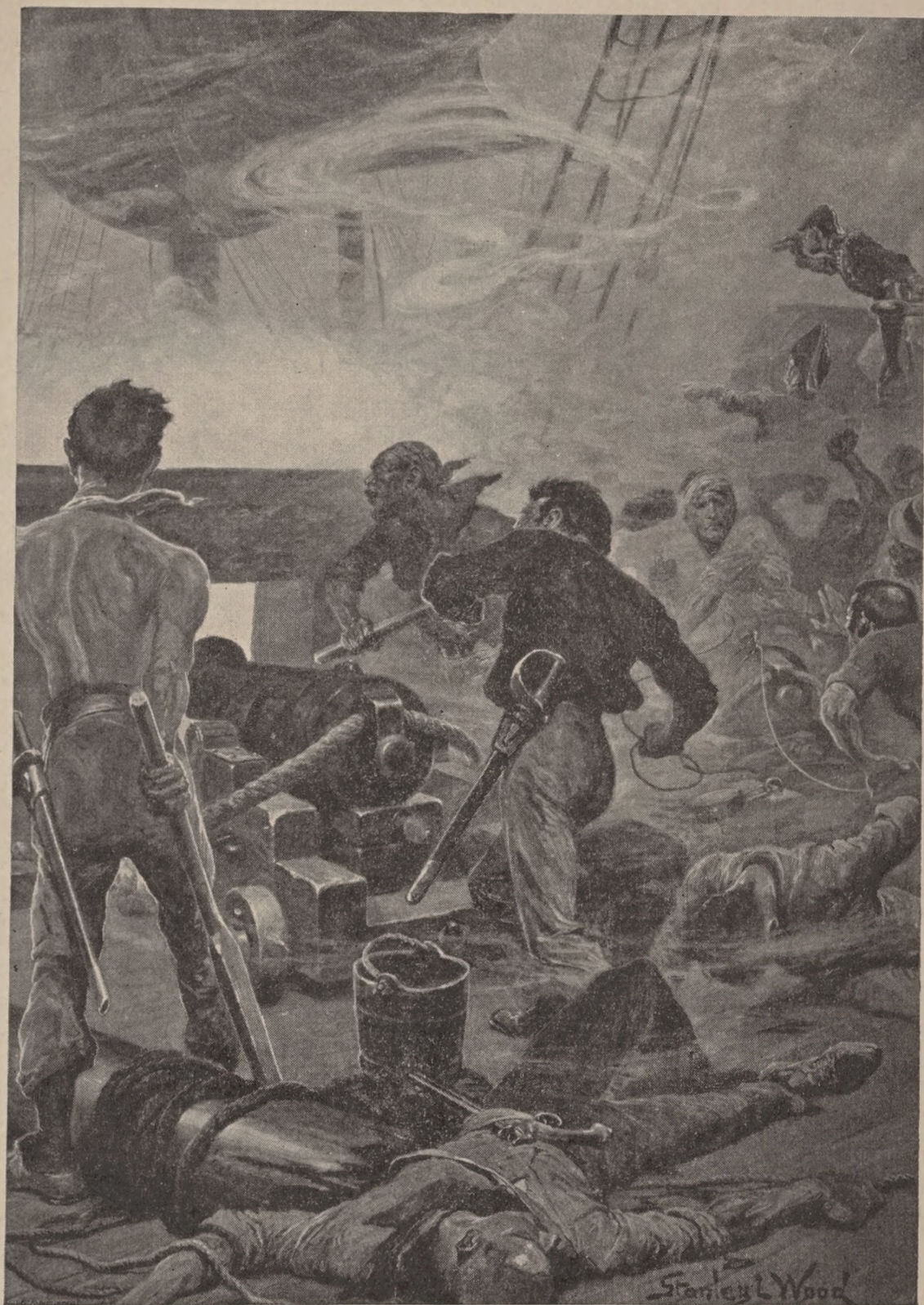
The American line slowly was moving toward the line of the British. There was a light wind just abeam and it was now only a question of a few minutes before the engagement would become general.

The anxious but determined young captain of the *Lawrence* now repeated the signals to his ships to be certain to observe the plan which he had formed

and for each vessel to engage the ship to which it had been assigned.

Twenty minutes passed and the wind was still so light that the *Lawrence* had passed only the third vessel in the line of the enemy's fleet. She was now almost as near the *Queen Charlotte* as she was to the *Detroit*. The *Niagara* was abaft the beam, and was at a considerable distance from the other vessels in the American squadron. It was then that the first gun from the American fleet was fired. Young Stephen Champlin, commander of the *Scorpion*, was the one to fire the first American gun in the engagement. Although no one realized it at the time, he was also to be the one to discharge the last gun in the fight.

The *Scorpion's* other guns now joined in the chorus, and then the *Lawrence* was the next to be heard. The resolute young commander, aware that his only hope of success lay in a close engagement, had withheld the firing of his guns until he had come nearer to his enemy. Already several shots from the British guns had taken effect on the American flagship. Indeed, at this time she was beginning to suffer severely and it was manifest to all in the engagement that the British in a measure were centering their fire upon the American flagship. It was believed at the time that this was done not only in the hope of destroying the powerful brig, but also of depriving the American ships of the services of their young commander.



THE ACTION NOW BECAME GENERAL.—Page 341.



The action now became general. The little *Scorpion* and the *Ariel* were ordered to drop a little farther back to the rear of the *Lawrence*. As neither of these little boats was protected by bulwarks, it was believed that they would suffer less if they were stationed in places where the hardest firing would not be received.

As the battle continued, Amos Proper, in the midst of his excitement, was aware that the *Scorpion* was not suffering much, although she was doing her utmost to assist the *Lawrence*, by keeping up a continual fire upon the opposing vessels. The roar of the great guns, the heavy banks of smoke that slowly were carried away by the light wind, the shouts of the men, the cries of the wounded were now heard on every side. No less than thirty-four of the heaviest guns in the British fleet were all pouring their destructive fire upon the *Lawrence*.

Convinced that he still was too far away from the *Detroit*, Captain Perry on his own deck gave orders, which were carried by trumpet from deck to deck until every vessel in the fleet understood, that all the vessels were to bear down upon the enemy and join in a close combat.

Captain Elliott, who was in command of the *Niagara*,—the brig, which was next in importance to the *Lawrence* of the entire American fleet,—was the first to send this order, but he did not obey it himself. He had the ablest crew in the entire fleet, and his

vessel, the *Niagara*, was the swiftest. What his aid, at this time, might have meant to the desperate young commander, no one can understand; but for some strange reason Captain Elliott remained far away.

Undaunted, however, the commander, from the deck of the *Lawrence* was now steadily firing upon the *Detroit* and his men were struggling desperately. The flag-ship still was bearing the brunt of the battle. Contending with a force twice as large as his own Perry fought desperately for two hours, helped only by the little *Scorpion* and *Ariel* and by an occasional shot from the far-away *Caledonia*, which occasionally was striving to aid Captain Perry in the midst of her own close struggle with the *Hunter*.

The *Lawrence* had suffered almost beyond description. Her sails were in shreds, her rigging had nearly all been shot away, and splinters were almost all that remained of her spars, while most of her guns had been dismounted by the terrible fire of several of the enemy's fleet.

On the deck the scene was even more awful. When the British had fired their first shot, Captain Perry had on his decks one hundred and three officers and crew, who were able to engage in the battle. Of this number, twenty-two now were dead and sixty-one had been severely wounded. If Amos Proper had been on the deck of the flag-ship he might have seen that young Alexander Perry, having twice been shot

through the hat was finally struck in his side by a splinter, and had fallen to the deck as if he were dead. It was not long, however, before the lad recovered and was not the least active of the crew of the brave little brig.

Lieutenant Yarnall had sought out Captain Perry not long before this time, and had it not been for his uniform he scarcely would have been recognized by his commander. The young lieutenant's nose had swelled to such an enormous size after it had been struck by one of the large splinters that his appearance was more like that of a man who had been crushed than of one who was still able to engage in a battle.

"All the officers on my division are cut down!" he shouted, "Can I have some others?"

The men were given him, but in a few minutes the young lieutenant again came to his captain, bleeding and wounded afresh, with the same request.

"I have no more officers to furnish you," said Captain Perry. "You must endeavor to make out by yourself!"

Young Lieutenant Yarnall said no more. Although he had been three times wounded, he still remained on the deck and he himself directed every shot from his battery. Others of the officers were dead or dying.

The scene was too horrible even to attempt to de-

scribe. Groans and cries and shouts and calls were mingled with the roar of the great guns.

In this time of stress and peril, the young Captain was troubled most of all by the failure of the *Niagara*—the swiftest and best equipped vessel in his fleet—to come to his aid. At this time the *Niagara* was far from the scene of battle. The *Caledonia*, which had been assigned to fight the *Queen Charlotte*, had left her line and Captain Elliott afterward explained that he thought his orders were to remain “within a half-cable length” of his special antagonist. If he had followed her to the place where she was fighting instead of remaining a half-cable length from her regular place in the British line, doubtless he would have prevented part of the suffering that occurred on board the *Lawrence*.

There were some who believed that there were more evil motives in the head of the American captain, and that he was waiting until the flag-ship should surrender or go down, and in this manner the fleet would be deprived of her young leader, when he himself would have assumed command, and if a victory should be won, the credit would be his own. Indeed, under the freshening breeze, the *Niagara*, instead of coming to the aid of the *Lawrence* now bore away toward the head of the British line, passing the American flag-ship to the windward and leaving her still exposed to the uninterrupted fire from the vessels that were engaging her. The *Niagara*, however, was now entering

into the struggle and returning the fire of three of the British fleet which attacked her.

Captain Elliott and his brig were now about a half-mile distant, abreast of the larboard beam, from the *Lawrence*, which was lying helpless. Captain Perry had fought as long as the vessel could stay afloat. More than two hours, almost single-handed, he had been contending against fearful odds. With officers dead, sailors wounded, and his vessel now helpless, he had himself fired the last gun of the brave little flag-ship.

On deck were only fourteen men remaining unhurt, and only nine of this number were seamen. What should the young captain do? To continue the struggle at such fearful odds was worse than hopeless; but as he looked up, he still saw the blue flag on which were the words of brave Captain Lawrence, "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP." From his deck, too, he saw the *Niagara*, still fresh, still swift and apparently uninjured. Up to this time she had been so far away from the scene of action that she had been out of all danger.

Abruptly and yet coolly, as if he were engaged in a small task in his own home, Captain Perry drew off his blue nankeen jacket, such as the ordinary seamen wore, and quietly put on his uniform. Was the young commander thinking of the outcome? Was he preparing to receive the surrender of Admiral Nelson's brave helper, Captain Barclay, as befitted a

man of his rank. Quietly, though the sound of the guns was still all about him, the young commander ordered his boat to be lowered. Turning to his lieutenant he said, "Yarnall, I'll leave the *Lawrence* with discretionary powers to you. Hold out or surrender, as your judgment and the circumstances shall dictate."

At the top of what was left of the masts the stars and stripes were floating, and though the flag had been shot through and through it was still shaking its defiance at the British gunboats. The great blue banner, however, with the words of the dying *Lawrence* still showing plainly, was taken by Perry on board the little boat, for when he was about ready to cast off he had suddenly bethought him of the pennant, and called to one of the sailors to roll it up and toss it to him.

Captain Perry was now standing in the barge. With him were four of the *Lawrence's* crew and his younger brother, Alexander. Soon after the little boat started on its way toward the *Niagara* it became manifest that the British were aware of the daring young captain's attempt. Many of their guns were at once trained upon him. As the little barge proceeded steadily on its way all about it the waters were splashing from the balls from the enemy's guns.

Captain Perry's oarsmen begged him to be seated, and not expose himself unnecessarily to the danger. The excited young Captain, however, refused until

at last his men declared they would turn back to the *Lawrence* unless he did as they besought him. Then it was that the young commander took his seat and the boat once more proceeded on its way.

At the gangplank of the *Niagara*, Captain Perry came face to face with Captain Elliott. Perry's face was black from the smoke of the battle, but the blackness could not conceal the determination that was expressed there.

"How goes the day?" inquired Captain Elliott.

"Bad enough," replied Captain Perry. "Why are those gunboats so far away?" he demanded abruptly.

"I'll bring them up."

"Do so!"

It is only justice to the departing captain to relate that from this time his activity and zeal were all that his commander could desire.

Hastily looking about him Captain Perry studied for a moment the condition of the *Niagara* and then without delay instantly ordered his blue banner to be run up and gave the signal for close action.

Meanwhile the former flagship had been suffering even more than has been described, and at last, for the sake of saving the lives of the few men who remained on board, Lieutenant Yarnall struck his colors. A great shout from the British fleet greeted this act, although it is said that the wounded on the deck of the *Lawrence*, when they heard and asked the meaning of the distant cheers and learned what the

cause was, cried out, "Sink the ship! Sink the ship! Sink the ship!"

It is a pleasure to relate that later these very men were greeted by their commander on the deck of his old flag-ship.

Captain Perry's plan now was to break the British line and he himself led in the attempt. So close had he passed to the *Lady Provost* and the *Chippewa* on his larboard, and the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* and the *Hunter* on his starboard, that the shot of a pistol could have been received on deck. Captain Perry was now pouring in tremendous broadsides to the right and left and had double-shotted his guns. Ranging slightly ahead he rounded to and once more raked the *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte*, which now, by some accident had become foul of each other. The other vessels also were now joining in the engagement and for a few minutes the firing was so terrific that scarcely a vessel was to be seen in the cloud of smoke that rested on the scene of battle.

Eight minutes after Captain Perry dashed through the British line the *Detroit* struck her colors! Quickly from every vessel in the British squadron, except the *Little Belt* and *Chippewa*, which tried to escape to leeward, came the signal of surrender. The attempt of these smaller vessels to get away, however, was unsuccessful, for Captain Champlin in the *Scorpion* and Captain Holdup with the *Trippe*, chased the

fleeing boats, and soon brought them back to their surrendered companions.

It was now three o'clock in the afternoon. The roar of the great guns had ceased. The heavy blue smoke slowly was being driven away by the gentle breeze. Only now was it possible to see how completely the two fleets had been interlocked.

It was true, the American flagship had struck her colors, but she had not been boarded by the British sailors when the *Detroit* surrendered.

What a feeling was in the heart of young Captain Perry, and in that of every one of his men! Never before in the history of the world had an entire British fleet been captured!

Waiting only until he was convinced that the victory was certain and complete, Captain Perry drew out an old letter from his pocket and placing it upon his naval cap, wrote upon the back of it a dispatch to General Harrison, which the world will never forget:

“We have met the enemy and they are ours; two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop. Yours with great respect and esteem, O. H. PERRY.”

Our own interests, however, are not only concerned with the wonderful success of the brave young commander, but also with the experiences that came to some of our young friends, a part of whom were engaged in this famous battle of Lake Erie.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CONCLUSION

THE morning of October 25th dawned clear and cool. Already most of the leaves had fallen from the branches of the great trees of the forest and such as still remained were russet-brown in color, harmonizing with the changes of the late fall all along the shores of Lake Ontario.

On the high bluff not far from the Proper homestead a little group of people were busily engaged in completing the work on what to a casual observer would seem to be a redoubt or some earthwork thrown up by soldiers.

Amos Proper with a shovel in his hand was working beside his sister Prudy, who, dressed in bloomers, was taking her share in the common task. In appearance the brother and sister now so closely resembled each other that it would have been difficult for a stranger to have distinguished Amos from his sister. The striking likeness in form and feature was made still more impressive by the fact that Prudy's dark hair was coiled beneath a sailor's cap, which her younger brother had brought with him upon his return from Lake Erie.

Not far from the workers stood Hiram Proper, but not the Hiram as we knew him in the early part of this story. The young sailor in the terrible battle of Lake Erie had suffered the loss of his left arm, and even now the frightful wound was not entirely healed. His interest in the task of his brother and sister, however, was keen, and occasionally he smiled as he marked the eager expression on the face of each.

Not the least interested member of the party was the dog, More, which turning frequently from his pursuit of the rabbits in the brush, or the partridges, that only lazily fled at his approach, noisily voiced his enthusiasm.

"There!" exclaimed Prudy at last throwing down her shovel. "I think that will do."

"What do you expect it to do?" inquired Hiram with a smile.

"It will teach the British sailors to keep their distance."

"Of course it will," joined in Amos. "They won't know the difference from the lake. Prudy says that young ensign of the *Prince Regent* has been here three or four times while we were away, and we don't propose to have him coming again."

For some reason Prudy's face flushed at the words of her brother and Hiram glanced at her in surprise. Was the visit of the young British ensign one of peace or war? Whatever his suspicion may have

been he did not refer to it, however, as he said, "I'm sorry I cannot help you drag up your 'gun.' "

"It isn't as heavy as it looks," laughed Amos. "And I guess I can almost manage it alone. Father will help me when he comes down to the shore."

"There's the *Prince Regent* now!" exclaimed Hiram suddenly as he pointed to the open waters on the lake. Instantly his companions looked in the direction indicated and could plainly see the little sail far away toward the horizon.

"We must get our 'gun' mounted right away!" said Amos excitedly.

"I'll help you," suggested Prudy and in a brief time the sturdy pair had their "gun" securely mounted on the redoubt which they had built.

This "gun" appeared to be at least a sixteen-pounder. Painted black, its long muzzle pointed threateningly toward the lake, it might well have halted the approach of any hostile party that chanced to discover it. The "gun," however, was merely a part of a maple log, some fourteen feet in length, shaped in the form of a cannon and painted to resemble its color. The "bore" had been fashioned by the aid of a large auger and some chisels, and to an observer from the lake it presented a most threatening attitude.

"They'll find out your trick, I'm afraid," laughed Hiram.

"They won't unless they come ashore," declared Amos, "and I don't believe they'll do that."

"Perhaps they'll come when they see your gun, the way the British officers came one by one from their ship in Barclay's fleet to surrender to Captain Perry when that battle on Lake Erie was ended," laughed Hiram.

"That must have been a great sight!" exclaimed Amos eagerly. "I wish I had been on the *Lawrence* with you."

"It's lucky for you you weren't there during the fight," said Hiram soberly, as he glanced at his shoulder. "I wasn't hit until just before the British surrendered, but I could see what was going on when the British officers came on deck."

"Great!" shouted Amos.

"Yes," said Hiram quietly. "It was great, but not so great as the way in which Captain Perry treated those men. He stood there on the after part of the deck and when the men came to him to hand him their swords, they had to pick their way across the deck over the dead bodies. Captain Perry told every one of them, when they stood there with the hilts of their swords held toward him, to keep their weapons. He asked after Barclay and he made every one of them feel that the young skipper not only could whip the British at their own game, but that he could show them a trick as a Christian gentleman, too."

"That was great," joined in Prudy warmly.

“Of course it was,” acknowledged Hiram. “But the sight I never shall forget was at sunset that wonderful day of September tenth. The sky was scarlet, and it almost seemed as if the wind had died away or was holding its breath. That was the time when the dead were buried. Every dead seaman was wrapped in a shroud, and with a cannon ball at his feet, every man was dropped, one at a time, into the still water.”

“What was done with the bodies of the officers?”

“They were buried the next day on the shore of South Bass Island. The same service was used for the British and Americans. Captain Perry, as soon as the fleet had surrendered and he had returned their swords to the officers, laid down upon the deck, right among his dead sailors and with a good many of the prisoners, too, still on the deck, and went to sleep. He was almost exhausted. Indeed, I saw him myself with his hands folded over his chest, but he still held onto his drawn sword. He was almost exhausted as I said, for you know he was sick when the battle began.”

“How did the ships look the next day?” asked Prudy.

“The two flagships,” explained Hiram, “were almost shot to pieces,—almost as badly as the crews. You see, we lost about one hundred and twenty-three men, while the British lost about one hundred and thirty-five.”

"The *Scorpion* lost only two men," said Amos proudly.

"That's right," acknowledged Hiram, "but you weren't in the thick of the fight the way we were on the *Lawrence* and *Niagara*. That makes me think of that picture I saw at Niagara on my way home."

"What was the picture?" asked Prudy.

"Why, it was a picture of John Bull dressed as a king and sitting in a chair with his hands pressed upon his stomach as if he was suffering a good deal of pain from having eaten a pear, which the picture called 'Perry.' Queen Charlotte in the picture was coming toward him with a bottle labeled 'Perry' in her hand. The cork of the bottle had been drawn and foam was coming out and in the foam were the names of the commanders of the American officers in the Battle of Lake Erie. The Queen is saying, 'Johnny, won't you have some more Perry?' But John Bull, twisting all about in his pain, answers, 'Oh! Perry! Curses with Perry! One disaster after another. I'm not half recovered of the bloody nose I got in the Boxing-Match.'"

"I suppose he was talking then about that fight with the *Boxer*," laughed Amos.

"Possibly he was," said Hiram, "but the thing that pleased me most wasn't the picture, it was the song that went with it." And he began to sing,—

"Bold Barclay one day to Proctor did say,  
I'm tired of Jamaica and Cherry,

So let us go down to that new floating town,  
And get some American Perry!  
Oh, cheap American Perry,  
Most pleasant American Perry,  
We need only all bear down, knock, and call,  
And we'll have the American Perry."

"Commander Barclay wasn't so much of a coward as Proctor was, anyway!" said Amos. "When we knocked the fleet to pieces, of course we could do more for General Harrison than we could before, but I never shall forget how Proctor and Tecumseh got out of Malden and the way we chased them clear up to the banks of the Thames."

"Yes," said Hiram, "we put an end to Tecumseh's confederacy—"

"Of course we did," broke in Amos, "for Tecumseh was killed in that battle of the Thames."

"Yes, and his death took the heart out of the Indians. Tecumseh, they say, was trying to get Proctor to make a stand long before he did, and if he had—"

"He wouldn't have been any better off," again broke in Amos.

"Perhaps not," acknowledged Hiram. "It was common talk that Proctor had not expected any pursuit by land, and I don't suppose he ever dreamed that Captain Perry would leave his fleet and join the army in the chase. They cut the bridges down before us and after they found out we were on their trail they even set fire to a house up there that had in it more than one thousand muskets."

"But we put out the fire and saved every gun," suggested Amos.

"Yes, we did," acknowledged Hiram. "When we got to fighting, however, we had not been at work five minutes before the whole force of British soldiers gave way and we made the most of them prisoners."

"It's a pity that we didn't get General Proctor," exclaimed Amos. "That would have helped to make up for the loss of Detroit and the way General Hull surrendered, a year before. The Indians put up a good deal better fight than the white men did."

"They had more at stake," exclaimed Hiram. "When Oshawahnah led his warriors around to the rear of the place where Tecumseh was fighting, the Indians all thought that their own allies were turning against them and of course, after the death of Tecumseh, there wasn't anything more they could do. It certainly seems to have been a pretty good year for the United States for the lucky *Enterprise* has taken the *Boxer*, it was reported at Niagara."

"Yes," said Amos. "The fight was five days before our battle on Lake Erie. I wonder if the Captain of the *Enterprise* will be treated by Congress the way our men were. You know Pennsylvania has voted a gold medal to Captain Perry, and Congress has voted one to Perry and Elliott too, and they voted extra pay for every one of the officers and to give a sword to every midshipman and sailing master."

"I'm afraid not," said Hiram. "The report was that both captains were killed in the engagement."

The gun was now properly placed in position, pointing threateningly in the direction of the *Prince Regent*, which was still far away. "I don't believe that sloop is making for this point at all," said Amos after a long look at the distant sail.

"Yes, it is," said Prudy positively.

"How do you know?" demanded Amos, as he looked sharply at his sister.

"I'm sure it is," replied the girl without making any explanation.

"Well," said Amos, "it's far enough away not to give us any trouble for an hour or two anyway. Hiram," he added, as he turned to his elder brother, "didn't you ever hear anything from Simeon?"

"Not a word," replied Hiram. "You know we waited a couple of hours after you left us on that mound when you started toward Presque Isle, and the Indians soon began to make such a powwow that we all decided that we would leave the place one at a time, and that every man should take his own chances. I have told you about how a dozen or more of them got me and took me with them in the night across the lake to turn me over to the British. I guess I was a pretty good prisoner, for pretty soon they set me to work to help paint some of their ships and after a little while they didn't keep a very close watch upon me, so that when I took a boat and sailed across the

lake they weren't on the lookout for me. It was lucky that I got away just then, for if I hadn't, I wouldn't have had anything to do in that battle of Lake Erie."

It was on Prudy's tongue to express her wish that he had not succeeded in his attempt to escape. She glanced at Hiram's shoulder and then at the face of her brother and was silent. His own feeling apparently was different from hers.

"Sir Walter got through all right," suggested Amos, "and found his way into General Harrison's army. I wonder if he didn't stop to tell the redskins some of his big stories," laughed the boy. "What is his real name?"

"I never heard what his true name is," replied Hiram. "He was a live lad and willing to do his part even if he did talk too much with his tongue."

"Do you suppose that Gordon has been exchanged?"

"I haven't heard anything about it, but it is more than likely that he has been."

"I should like to see that old British Jackie, Tom, again," said Amos. "He was good to me when I was 'pressed' into the service. He was the best Jackie I saw at York or anywhere else. Do you think," he added, "that Simeon ever got through the Indian lines?"

"He wasn't the kind of a fellow who would be likely to do that," said Hiram shaking his head.

"The poor chap seemed almost to have lost his head in his terrible experience with the press-gang."

"Well, we're all home now anyway," declared Prudy, "and if we can keep the crew of the *Prince Regent* from landing here any more, we won't have anything to complain of this winter. We have enough to eat and none of you will have to be away from home before next spring, and maybe the war will be ended before that time."

"Don't you believe any such thing!" declared Amos promptly. "The redcoats aren't the kind that give up very easily, and now that we have started, we aren't going to give in yet awhile either. You just wait!"

"Look yonder," suggested Hiram pointing once more toward the open lake. "That sloop, whether it is the *Prince Regent* or not is heading this way."

"That's what she is!" said Amos, his excitement instantly increasing. "What do you suppose she wants anyway?"

"Oh, probably she'd like to get some of the supplies we have in the cellar. It would be like Sir James Yeo's men to try to strip their enemy along the shore of their winter supplies, if they could."

"I don't believe they would do such a thing any quicker than the Americans would if they were on the Canadian side of the lake!" spoke up Prudy.

"What's the matter with you, Prudy?" demanded Amos. "Are you a Tory?"

"You know better than that!" replied the girl, though for some unaccountable reason she still seemed to be somewhat confused.

The interest of the little party, however, was now centered upon the far-away sail, which undoubtedly was approaching. There was a strong breeze blowing and many of the little waves of Lake Ontario were capped with white. The sloop, manifestly swift and well handled, was now so near that her motions, as she ran before the wind, could be plainly seen.

"Here comes father!" suddenly said Amos as Mr. Proper joined the group and looked anxiously at the approaching gunboat.

"We'll give them a warm reception, boys," he said in a low voice as he turned with a smile of amusement and looked at the gun which Prudy and Amos had placed upon the earthwork they had erected. "I wish that was iron and not maple! We'd teach these thieving British Jackies that they couldn't come ashore and take our winter supplies."

"She's coming about now!" suddenly exclaimed Hiram. "Look at her run up into the wind. She's a beauty and whoever is handling her understands his business."

"See there!" joined in Amos. "They are doing just what I thought they would! See that little boat, putting off? They're going to send a party ashore."

"Get your guns," suddenly ordered Mr. Proper. "See that the priming is all right in every one of

them! You too, Prudy! Take your gun and come with us."

Startled by the words of their father, all three joined him as he led the way toward the bushes in the rear of the place where the cannon had been mounted.

"When that little yawl comes nearer the shore, we'll march past by fours," declared Mr. Proper with a smile. "We'll go in and out and back and forth among these bushes and every little while we'll step out in view so that the men can see us and perhaps they'll think we have a force of soldiers stationed here. They'll be more likely to, if they get sight of your guns," he added. "We may be able to keep them from landing."

The "maneuvers" were speedily begun. It was an unusual march that followed. The four "soldiers" advancing into the clear space would speedily move across it to the bushes on the opposite side and then turning swiftly would repeat the operation. Occasionally the way was varied by an appearance from the middle of the bushes instead of from the end. By running at their utmost speed when they were concealed from sight, and then marching more leisurely across the open space, Mr. Proper was trying to impress the British in the approaching boat that more men were guarding the point than could be seen.

"The yawl is going to land," said Amos more excited than his older companions, as he pointed to the

little boat which now was not more than one hundred feet from the shore.

"I'll go up on the bank where the gun is," said Mr. Proper. "Let me take your cap," he added turning to Prudy. "It may look a little more as if a real garrison had been established here."

Bidding his children remain behind the bushes in readiness for a call, if help should be required, Mr. Proper advanced and shouted to the men in the yawl, "Ahoy, there! Who are you and what do you want?"

"We want to talk to you," said the young officer rising in the stern of the boat.

"Prudy," exclaimed Amos in a low voice, as he turned to his sister, "do you see who that is in that boat?"

"Yes," replied his sister quietly.

"It's that young ensign that came here when the press-gang took me!"

"He isn't an ensign any longer," said Prudy. "He has been promoted."

"How did you know?" demanded her brother in surprise.

Prudy, however, did not reply, nor did Amos learn at the time of the fact that the young ensign had been the writer of the strange letter of which he himself had been the innocent bearer weeks before, when he had returned from Sackett's Harbor.

Indeed it was not until the following spring that

he also learned of an occasional visit made by the young sailor to the Proper homestead and that forage had not been his only purpose in coming. As these visits, however, are parts of another tale, their meaning and purpose must be passed over in the present narrative.

"Tell what you want where you are!" Mr. Proper was now calling to the young officer.

"I can't," replied the man in the yawl.

"You'll have to," commanded Mr. Proper. "If you or your men make a move to come ashore, I'll order my gunner to fire upon you." As he spoke Mr. Proper pointed toward the great "gun" near which he was standing.

Apparently for the first time the British sailors became aware of the threatening cannon. There was a hurried consultation before the young ensign called,—“Whose battery is that? When was it erected? What is that gun planted there for?”

"It is specially designed for the needs of British sailors," retorted Mr. Proper. "If you don't believe it, try to come ashore and we'll prove it to you."

"I don't want to fight," shouted the young officer. "I have just come to—"

"Then if you don't want to fight," broke in Mr. Proper, "the best thing for you is to go back to the *Prince Regent* and leave this part of the lake. If we find that she is here an hour from now, we shall train this gun upon her. The sooner you go back

and report, the better it will be for you and for everybody concerned."

"If you fire on us, you will suffer more than we will in the end."

"So I hear you say. That remains to be seen, however. We were with Perry on Lake Erie and learned how to smash a British fleet."

"If I go back to the *Prince Regent* and then come with a flag of truce, will you receive me?"

"Yes, if you come with only two men."

The young officer instantly seated himself and ordered his men to row back to the man-of-war.

It was not long, however, before the yawl again was seen approaching, with the young officer still in command but with only two men rowing.

The yawl grounded upon the beach about two hundred feet distant from the "battery," and as Amos and Prudy, who now had resumed her sailor's cap, and their father were waiting to receive the visitor, the young officer approached Mr. Proper respectfully and said, "Did you say that you were with Perry on Lake Erie?"

"We did," replied Mr. Proper grimly.

"Do you know that was the first time an entire British fleet was ever taken?"

"It won't be the last," broke in Amos, "if you don't get off the lakes pretty soon! We're just beginning to learn how!"

"Be quiet, Amos," said his father sternly. "It

will be time enough to boast when the war shall be ended. What do you want?" he demanded as he turned again to his visitor.

The young sailor did not reply for a moment as he was looking perplexedly at Prudy, who for some reason apparently was eager to retire from the shore. Indeed before another word was spoken she turned abruptly to the woods and disappeared in the direction of her home.

The young officer still apparently somewhat perplexed turned to Mr. Proper and said, "I didn't know that you had two sons who looked so much alike."

"I haven't," answered Mr. Proper grimly, "though I don't understand how you know what my name is, nor why you have come here."

"If you will let me talk with you alone, I'll explain," replied the officer. "You have a cannon on the shore and according to what I saw from the lake you must have a little garrison here, though I don't understand why the Yankees ever thought it worth while to establish a post here."

"The British have landed here several times," exclaimed Mr. Proper dryly. "If you want to talk to me, come up the beach, but we must keep within range of our guns."

The two men withdrew a short distance, and although Amos listened intently, he was unable to hear a word that was spoken. In a brief time the inter-

view was ended and to the surprise of Amos his father bade the visitor come with him to his house.

It is true Mr. Proper conducted the young officer by a route from which the sight of the "cannon," and the "post" could not be had and that he ordered Amos to remain on the beach.

An hour elapsed before Mr. Proper and his young visitor returned to the beach, where the latter speedily embarked and was rowed back to the waiting *Prince Regent*, which had been cruising on and off awaiting his return.

"What did he want?" inquired Amos of his father after the visitor had departed.

"I can't explain to you now."

"Does Prudy know?"

"You'll have to ask her," replied Mr. Proper quietly, though a brief smile appeared for a moment on his face as he spoke.

Aware that an explanation would not be given, Amos said no more.

The lad remained waiting upon the beach until the *Prince Regent* disappeared in the distance and then he returned to his house.

Whether or not Prudy explained the purpose of the young British officer in his visit or indeed knew anything of what he had said to her father, Amos did not find out, at least at the time. Indeed the lad did not again refer to what he soon discovered was not meant for him to know.

There were, however, no idle days for Amos or his father. The prospect of a speedy end to the war was not bright and convinced that they would be summoned again to service on land or on the lakes in the coming spring they were compelled to devote themselves day and night to the labors of the farm.

Hiram Proper's condition did not permit of his doing much work, even on his own place, and consequently his father and brothers were compelled to look out not only for the tasks on their own clearing, but also on those of the wounded sailor brother.

The life, however, was not entirely filled with labor and peril. There were evenings when before the huge fire-place in the Proper homestead the entire family would be assembled. There, while corn was being popped, or the maple syrup boiled there were some merry times. Whatever the feeling of the household may have been concerning the dire possibilities of the coming year, their chief interest centered in the stories which Hiram and Amos related, in response to the neverfailing demands of the family, of the stirring experiences in which they had shared on Lake Erie. Indeed the name of Captain Oliver Hazard Perry was almost as familiar in the Proper home as was that of any member of the family.

As the days passed and occasional reports were received of the fame which the young Rhode Islander had won in his perilous fight and the rewards which were heaped upon him from one end of the land to

the other, in the songs which were sung, and in the accounts of the addresses which were made by some of the most eloquent speakers in the little country, which for the second time was struggling for its independence, the Proper family felt almost as if they shared in the experiences. Had not two members of the family been active in the wonderful fight? Had not one of them suffered? Had not those who had fought and those who had remained at home also a share? Was there not flying from a rude pole, which Amos had erected near the house, another large blue banner, on which were exhibited in letters of white muslin a foot in length, the never-to-be-forgotten words: DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP? Had not Amos ended every story he had to tell of the bravery of the fleet by reporting the letter which Commodore Perry wrote General Harrison when the victory had been won,—“We have met the enemy and they are ours; two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop. Yours with great respect and esteem, O. H. Perry.”

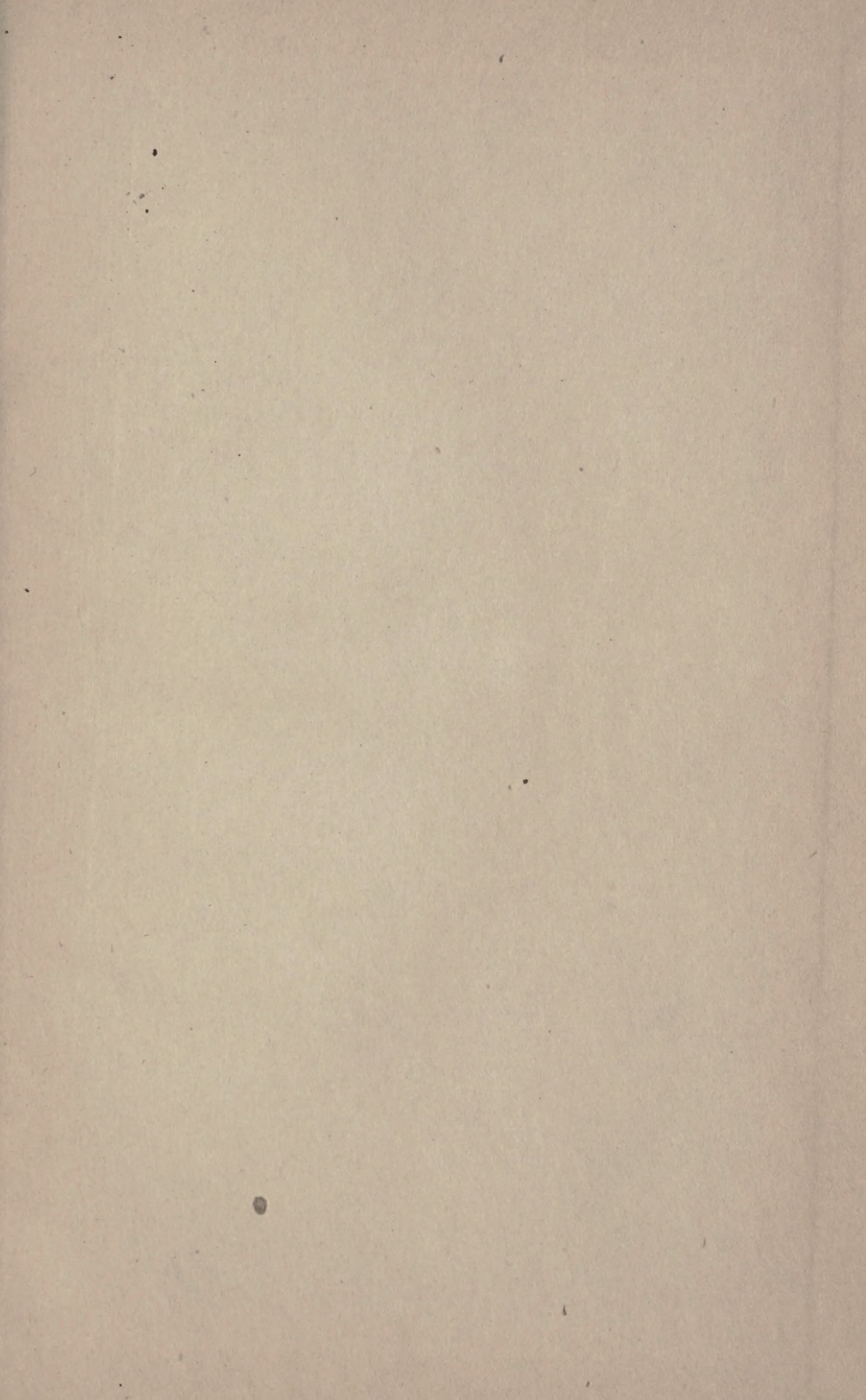
Were the members of the Proper family mistaken? Was not a share of the wonderful victory theirs by right? And does not every American boy, whether his lines be cast in 1813 or a century later, also feel that a share of the pride of his country justly felt in Perry's wonderful achievement belongs also by right to him?

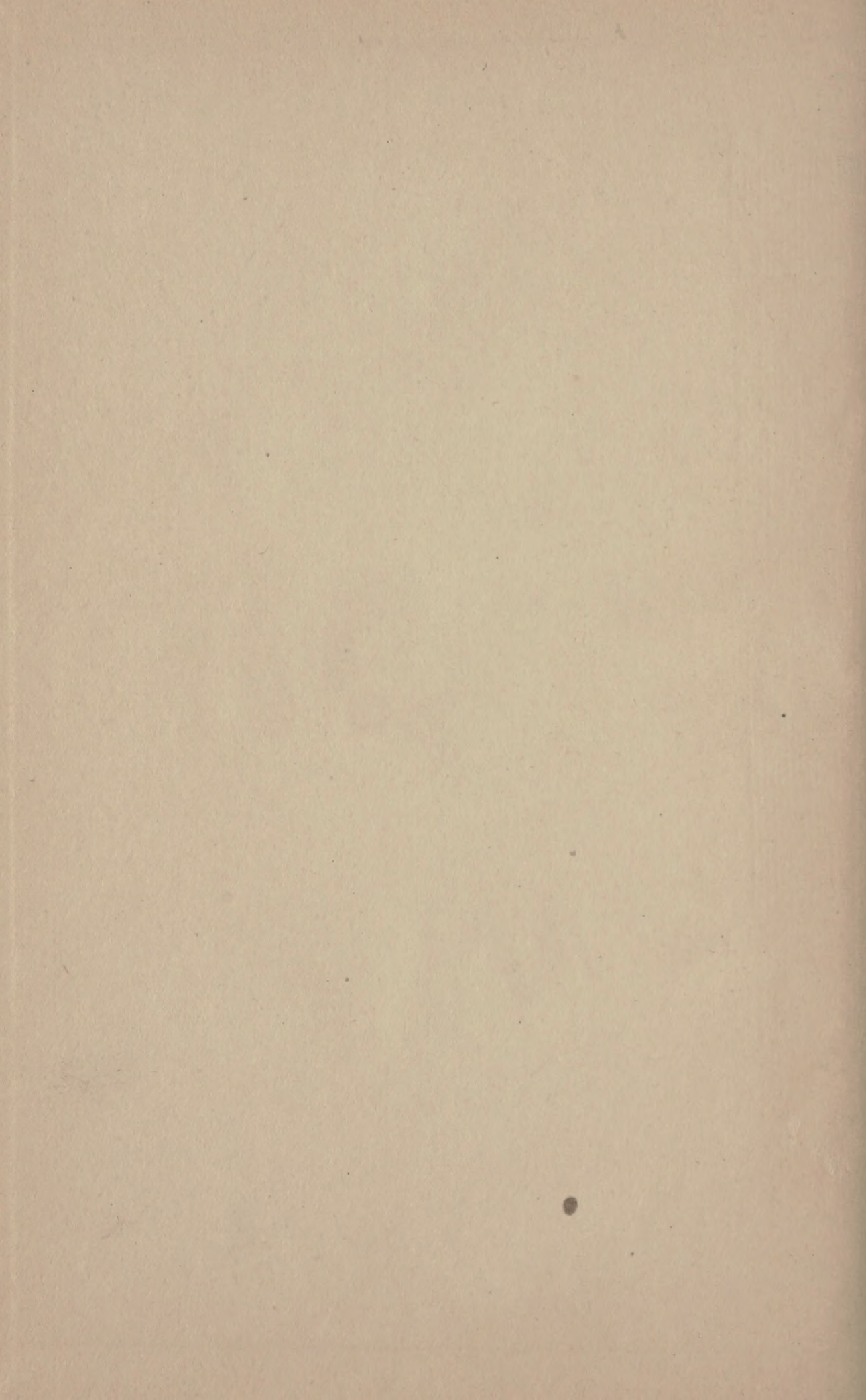
THE END













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